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*James. Maidment.*

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# MANTUAN REVELS.

*A COMEDY.*

# TWO PLAYS:

## MANTUAN REVELS,

*A COMEDY,*

IN FIVE ACTS;

## HENRY THE SEVENTH,

*AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY,*

IN FIVE ACTS.

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By RICH. CHENEVIX, Esq.

F.R. & E.S.; M.R.I.A. &c.

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NOTE.——That part of the plot which relates to ARSENIO, OLIVIA, and JULIA, is taken from one of Cinthio's novels: that which relates to CLAUDIO and AMANDA, from the well known story of the "Curious Impertinent," in Don Quixotte.

# MANTUAN REVELS.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A Street before the Duke's House.*

JACINTHA *(knocking at the door).*

PIETRO! Pietro, I say! open. Will the fellow sleep 'till doomsday? Nay, if he be not waked by his own snoring, I may knock in vain.

*(Pietro enters, yawning and stretching.)*

PIETRO.

It blows a rank storm, that a man can't sleep quietly in his chair; for bed I've known none these seventeen nights. Ya— ya— *(yawning).* Jacintha! Oh, 'tis you.

JACINTHA.

Yes, it is Jacintha that has been calling this half hour. Did n't you hear me?

PIETRO.

Yes, yes, I heard you. I thought it must be a woman or a storm. But what make you here at this hour?

JACINTHA.

Gallanting, to be sure. Here are rare doings among the maskers. I 've made one with them all night.

PIETRO.

Yes, and all the last night, and every last night for these three weeks. You may turn night into day, and day into night, as you please; but, when my night has been day, or my day night, my morning must still be morning, or the state suffers for it.

JACINTHA.

The state, truly, coxcomb!

PIETRO.

Yes, girl; who else will rise betimes to tell the courtier that his Excellency will sleep two hours longer?—to drive away the beggarly suitor with a threat of 'Never,' and the rich one with a promise of 'Presently?' Who else will touch the fees of porterly protection? With-

out me, none can see the Duke. I make him visible and invisible: I am the Duke's keeper, and his Grace cannot be effused without me.

JACINTHA.

How prove you this?

PIETRO.

Can he budge hence, unless Pietro open the door? Can he be seen, unless Pietro turn the key? Is not his palace his prison, 'till Pietro set him at liberty? Oh, I am a wonderful master of his goings out and his comings in.

JACINTHA.

I am glad thou art master of any thing; for I thought thee as poor a varlet as any in Mantua.

PIETRO.

Fear not that, wench. I am master of many things, being master of myself; for true it is, he that serveth himself hath a wise master.—But, Jacintha—

JACINTHA.

Well, Pietro—

PIETRO.

—When shall we two be joined?

JACINTHA.

No sooner than I have already said. When the betrothed Signor Octavio shall return from England to espouse my mistress the Signora Olivia, with the full consent of the noble Duke her father—

PIETRO.

—Then shall Signor Pietro swear eternal fidelity on the red lips of Signora Jacintha. But 't is now two years since Octavio set out upon his travels, and no news yet of his approaching dalliance.

JACINTHA.

Nay, we must wait, and let our betters go on before us. My lady wills it so, and we must obey. But here come lights; let us withdraw.

[*Exeunt.*

*The* DUKE *and* OLIVIA *cross the stage towards the door of the Duke's palace. He enters it. As* OLIVIA *is going to follow him, two men in masks approach her.*

FIRST MASK.

Now is the time; the simple gull is gone.

S'death! she'll be hous'd, and we shall lose our prey!

SECOND MASK.

Hail, tripping fair! Methinks yon antiquated swain is yet but green in his apprenticeship to love, to leave thee thus alone in such times.

OLIVIA.

Unhand me, sirs! What, base presumptuous slaves!

SECOND MASK.

Oh, some appendage to nobility! Why faith she looks it well.—But you shall find us no worse men for not tracing our lineage directly nearer than Adam.

OLIVIA.

No more of this, or with my piercing shrieks
I will awaken Mantua. Let me go!

*Enter* ARSENIO, *followed by* SOLARIO *with lights.*

ARSENIO.

What noise is this?—A woman!—Ha, Olivia!
Blest chance that brought me to her rescue! Sirs,
I will die hard, ere you shall harm this lady!

*Fight. The Masks fly. Re-enter* DUKE.

DUKE.

What clash of swords?—Arsenio! then 'tis well.

ARSENIO.

What, no more heart than this! I smile to think
So bold in love should be so tame in fight.

OLIVIA *(to the Duke).*

That it is well, Arsenio is the cause.

DUKE.

Let some pursue the caitiffs. Noble Signor,
Use my best credit in the state of Mantua,
As most shall help your need.

OLIVIA.

What thanks I owe,
I'll pay in thoughts, not words.

ARSENIO.

Oh, do not thus
Make my poor service blush. I pray you hold,
And recommend me to your gentle thoughts
For further use.

OLIVIA.

When your good leisure serves,
I would entreat a word upon Octavio.
The theme might lead me further in discourse

Than fits the hour. Next morning, or at even,
If it shall suit you so.

ARSENIO.

Your hour is mine,
To follow all your wishes. Fare you well!

[*Exeunt* DUKE, OLIVIA, *&c.*

ARSENIO.

Again, and still Octavio—nought but he!
She thanks me with his name! When she would say,
'T is well, Arsenio,' or, 'I'm bounden to you,'
She hails me with 'Octavio.' Can this be?....
Why true, I am his friend.

*Enter* PEREGRINO.

PEREGRINO.

Signor Arsenio,
My master greets you with his loving service,
And recommends him to your kindest thoughts.

ARSENIO.

Ha! from Octavio, is it not the same?

PEREGRINO.

One Peregrino, a strange simple fool,
That followed far the fortunes of his master;

And hither rides before them, to announce
His speedy coming to his native Mantua.

ARSENIO.

Indeed! so soon!

PEREGRINO.

So soon, my lord! So soon
Sounds not like welcome.

ARSENIO.

Varlet, is this so?
Or dost thou act the counterfeit of folly,
Thou drone, thou fool?

PEREGRINO.

'T is so, upon mine honour.
Some four weeks since, I left my lord in England,
The saddest Signor in that smoky land.
His present purpose is to journey homeward.—
These will explain his meaning—*(giving letters).*

ARSENIO *(reading).*

'To Olivia'—'To Olivia'—'To Arsenio.'—
'This do not fail to hold secret, as you prize
my friendship.'

PEREGRINO *(aside, while Arsenio is reading).*

I may be drone—I may be fool; but I have studied in my travels. I have read the book of man. Every whirl of my wheels has been a new page to me: and if my dove Octavio find not that the raven hath been busy at his nest, then will I say I have never gone my own length from Mantua.

ARSENIO *(aside).*

I must be wary with this caitiff here.....
*(To* PER.) Well, and the lands you 've seen, the seas you 've scap'd?
Come you not stuff'd with travel and strange sights?
You 're else a faulty traveller indeed.

PEREGRINO.

With the most dire recountments; such as ne'er
Mortality has heard of. When I speak,
The aged lay their hands athwart their breasts,
And bless themselves, that their grey heads have chronicled
No terrors like to these. The sceptic wonders;
And youth doth glow with fearful admiration.

The maidens lend their prayers that Heaven protect me,
And pay my 'scapes with sighs.

ARSENIO *(giving a purse).*

Here's this to pay them.
See that thou keep thyself unseen of all.
When that is vacant, ask to be replenish'd.
Back to thy gossips, scare them with thy tales....
Away, I say....*(Exit* PEREGRINO.) This may be better yet.
Solario, ho! Thou seest yon silly knave;
Follow, lay siege to him. Go drown the varlet
In full libations. Sink in flowing casks
His giddied sense. For ten whole days be mad....
How now, away! Thy master bids thee riot.

[*Exit* SOLARIO.

Here's matter still for mischievous contrivance.
'T is yet confus'd; but I will turn the time
To my advantage, and my love's contentment:
Then, from this web of casual and design'd,
I'll spread a sail to catch the prosperous wind.

[*He retires.*

*Enter* PIETRO, *with* GRATIANO *in chains.*
*The* DUKE *meets them.*

PIETRO.

Room, there! room! Stand back, and make way for the prisoner to hear himself condemned. .....Here, an 't please your worship, is a fellow that was taken with his weapon drawn, and he denies it. He was seen to deal most violent blows upon the multitude, and he denies it. There's blood upon his sword, and he denies it. --What law has Mantua to extract the truth from him, and make him own himself a false rogue, when he says this is not so?

DUKE.

What answer you to this? Our proper blood,
Our daughter stirs within us. Must you riot,
And mingle your hot broils with those above you?
What can you answer now?

GRATIANO.

He has said truly.
Two running men, the cry of law pursued,
I sought to stop; they turn'd their arms on me.

If to resist the sword that would have slain me;
If to defend the life which Heaven hath given me,
Till Heaven, not man, shall seek it, be a crime,
Then I am guilty.

DUKE.

Call the lord Arsenio.....
And lo, he comes, to crush thee by his presence.
(ARSENIO *comes forward.*)

GRATIANO.

My lord Arsenio, is it true indeed,
That I, with lawless and blood-thirsting sword,
As now I learn, have 'tempted 'gainst thy life?
Have I, by word or deed, by night or day,
Worn such rebellious ensign, as could lead
To such a deed as this? Have I e'er wrong'd
thee?

ARSENIO.

Is this not Gratiano, as I think,
The son of old Petruchio, and the brother
Of certain Julia?

GRATIANO.

Gods, can this be so!
The time has been that I were better known.—
And my poor Julia too!

ARSENIO.

I do remember.
I will not say, my lord, directly say,
This man is he; but you shall judge.... This Julia,
A maiden fair, I lov'd—as sometimes used,
By gallant gentlemen, and noble too,
To love among the base;—which she perceiving,
Plum'd up her hopes with marriage, and held out
A desperate siege 'gainst my solicitation.....
I had almost forgotten; but 't is like
That disappointed pride should work the pair
To any act of vengeance.

DUKE.

Nay, 't is certain.
See him proclaim'd an exile. If this night
Find him in Mantua, upon my life
He dies a traitor's death. [*Exit* DUKE.

ARSENIO.

And use him gently.
Since that the law condemns him, he shall have
What my best means can furnish for his exile.
[*Exit* ARSENIO.

PIETRO.

I knew it! I knew the law would find him guilty..... Why, what a rogue wast thou to deny it! There is but one way to save thee now: — Persuade thy mother to confess she played thy father false, and induce some drops of nobility into thy blood. It is heinous not to be noble, when you attack a nobleman.

GRATIANO.

I could have spar'd this jest. I prithee leave me.....
Leave me, that I my native land may quit
With resignation due. I am not guilty—

PIETRO.

Not guilty still! And dost thou know better than the law? Not guilty! Art thou not sent into banishment? Art thou not guilty of being sent into exile? Away! let me not find thee here tomorrow, that's all. Fare thee as thou may'st. Adieu.

GRATIANO.

And farewell, Mantua!....
There's foulness in this act. It is Arsenio's.
Arsenio seiz'd the prop of Julia's virtue,

That the fair pile might tumble at his feet.
Arsenio's breath has blasted.... (*Enter* JULIA.]
Gentle Julia,
A long farewell! I will not say I'm guiltless;
Thou knowest it true. A long farewell, my sister!

JULIA.

Come, be of better hope. I'll to the duke,
And plead in right for justice.

GRATIANO.

Do not, Julia.
Let me not bear away the thought, that thou
Shouldst kneel before him, or entreat his favour.
I would not have thee, Julia, beg my life.

JULIA.

Even so as you approve.

GRATIANO.

'T is fearful all.
The meed that beauty pays to lawless power,
Is the soul's banishment from life eternal.
Thou couldst not so demean thee, but Arsenio
Would trample on thee;—couldst not beg,
But he would fill thy ears with wanton jests.
The temperate seeds of virtue would be scorch'd

In such hot beams. There's many a lowly plant
Scents the green shade, but withers in the sun.

JULIA.

The duke has a fair daughter, whose report
Is chaste as frozen tears of new-born Dian;
But free and open as the earth in bounty.
To her will I and kneel.

GRATIANO.

There's comfort yet,
And we will speed to it.—But, oh beware!
That still Arsenio love thee is most like,
And seeks to win thee at a hellish price.
Each hour, my Julia, hold account with Heaven,
How thou administer the poor man's treasure,
And be a very niggard of thy fame.
There's not a pebble in the edifice,
No, not so much as one poor grain of sand,
But is the base and buttress of the rest.

[*Exeunt.*

*Re-enter* ARSENIO.

ARSENIO.

If it be love that quickens in my veins,
And heats the healthful current of my blood,

It is not of such elements as bore
My vows to Julia. What's i' th' name Olivia,
That swollen sighs should burst my bosom forth,
Or choak the lawful utt'rance of my voice,
Flutter my heart, or crimson o'er my face,
When I do hear it? These it cannot do.
But there's a goodly beauty in her eye,
The signal to soft parle; a majesty
In every act, that tempts me to subdue it;
A richness and a treasure to be rifled,
Fitter for gods than men. Besides, there is
A splendour in the Duke of Mantua's daughter,
Each separate charm provokes a separate wish,
Whose sum doth take the very power of Love;
Borrows his look, his tears, his speech, his silence,
And wheedles with the most devilish success.

ARSENIO *knocks at the Duke's door.*

*Enter* PIETRO.

ARSENIO.

Is your lady at home, friend?

PIETRO.

For her person I will answer that it is, for

I have just now beheld it; but for the will that doth govern her, whether it be that she shall be seen or not, is what I know not.

ARSENIO.

And of that I can inform you, for I come hither by fair and just appointment.

PIETRO.

Oh, sir, by your pardon.—Appointment! I did not think my lady so hazardous as to meet by stipulation. Chance indeed, or so, may sometimes befriend a lady's wishes; but stipulation!—Oh, 't is too adventurous and bold.

ARSENIO.

And why so? What more danger canst thou see in an interview of appointment than of chance?

PIETRO.

Appointment, sir, doth indicate foregone propensity, and moves the soul by longing expectation. There's no physic for the mind that's ruled by previous resolution.

ARSENIO.

These carnivals are costly things, yet 't is fit that all should have their share of them. Have

you never some sweet maiden heart whom you would dizen out to bear a part in them?—Here, in this little space, lie silk gowns, caps, feathers, trinkets, pearls, and jewels. Let her wear some for my sake.

[*Gives a purse, and exit into the palace.*

PIETRO.

This is a gracious Mantuan, and Fortune was not blind when she picked him out for greatness. He has a noble air, and methinks never more noble than at this moment.—'Carnivals are costly!'—What would he have said, now, at any other season? Nay, that I know not. But it is a true mark of highness never to be stopped for speech. [*Follows into the palace.*

SCENE II.—OLIVIA's *apartment in the Duke's palace.*

*Enter* OLIVIA *and* ARSENIO.

OLIVIA.

A little longer, yet; and yet a little!
Well, I must smile, and say 't is well. 'T is so,
If he do please it so.—Who brought the letters?

ARSENIO.

A servant of Octavio's—a mere sot,
Whose brains had felt the strength of Mantuan
wines;
And in so strange a plight, that 't was a war
Betwixt his head and heels, the which should
bear him.

OLIVIA.

But he's the last in Mantua saw Octavio.
I would have spoken with him.

ARSENIO.

He is gone
I know not whither.

OLIVIA.

There is something here
That thou wouldst hide. Thou shalt not gloss
it so
But that a lover's eye shall pierce it. Speak—
Is not Octavio well? I 'll fly to meet him!—
Does not Octavio live? then I 'll die too!—
Is not Octavio true? Ah, then I 'll die!

ARSENIO.

He lives, and well; and, I dare swear, most
true.

OLIVIA.

And wherefore swear it? Is it not enough,
To say Octavio 's true? You would not swear
That yonder is the sun. What is, yet is,
Though oaths were none. I think Octavio true.

ARSENIO *(aside).*

How studiously doth she persuade herself
To that, which but to hint, in me, were treason!

OLIVIA.

And yet thou seest not with a lover's eyes;
Thou dost not listen with a lover's ears.

ARSENIO.

Not with a lover's eyes! Oh could it be,
That in the world's wide orb another form
Like thine could tread the earth; such majesty
Tun'd by such mellow grace, whose softness
Awes while it soothes; yet such another form
Would want the mind that gilds that peerless
temple.
Or, could that mind be twice bestowed on
woman,
Still all would want yon bright identity!
'T were not Olivia.

OLIVIA.

Now you flatter me.
But yet it pleases me. I will be blind,
And dream it is Octavio; so it sooths me.

ARSENIO.

Could I but think, that, at the end of years,
That hand were mine, to mingle vows with kisses;
That bosom to recline my love-worn cheek;
Those lips to breathe their fragrance; I were blest,
Though stripes and penance were my hourly pastime.
Oh such, indeed, were love! But he—Octavio!

OLIVIA.

Ha! what of him?

ARSENIO.

Shall he who loses thus
One moment that might teem with bliss of angels,
Find it again? Is he who cannot choose
Betwixt the orient gem and muddy jasper,
Worthy to wear the precious jewel?—No;
But he who knows it matchless.

OLIVIA.

Is this so?
Does my sense quicken with a false conceit?
Or are my ears enthralled?

ARSENIO.

'T is not Octavio,
It is Arsenio speaks!—Oh, do not frown!
It is Arsenio kneels! Arsenio loves!

OLIVIA.

Accursed spirit that dispell'd the doubt!
Rise! for I feel a soul could trample thee.—
And yet 't is well. Octavio is not false,
'T is clear! 't is clear!—Who waits? Conduct
this signor—

*Enter* PIETRO.

Madam, there's one without desires to see you. She's a young person, and none of the foulest: she is such, indeed, that my young master were more like to reward me for such a present than my young mistress.

OLIVIA.

What may she be, or know you whence she is?

PIETRO.

I know nought about her, but her person which is taper, and her face which is comely; two good appendages to youth in females. She seems in distress for your ladyship; for, when I asked her whether my lord would not do as well, she fell into a strange ague.

OLIVIA.

Well, give her entrance.

PIETRO.

This morning, too, I met that strange traveller Peregrino, who accompanied Signor Octavio. I could not learn much of him, as indeed he seemed not to know much; but this I've learnt, that there's something stirring in that quarter.

OLIVIA.

How! Peregrino, and not come to me!

ARSENIO.

'T is even so, if you would hear me speak.

OLIVIA.

Of Peregrino, sir, I'll hear you speak,

But of nought else.—Attend within my call.—

[*To* PIETRO, *who exit.*

Well, Sir, of Peregrino?

ARSENIO.

I'll not say

Octavio's false, Octavio loves no more,
That were a very palsy of the mind,
And we should pity him. He is most true.
His eye doth choose the wholesome food it loves;
His pulse doth quicken at Olivia's name:
But 't were a vile infection that could fix
On the immaculate day such blotches
As do deform the ugly night; and read,
In that fair page of nature, such conceits
As blast the maiden rose of innocence,
And make its blushes rank!

OLIVIA.

Our compact, sir.
This is not Peregrino: speak to that.

ARSENIO.

Is it not vile, that he, a base-born carle,
An offal of fair breeding, be confided
With doubts that injure heaven? Oh, is it meet

That he should brawl them in the stews of
Mantua,
And sully Dian in the mantling fumes
Of pestilential wine?

OLIVIA.

No, on my soul,
This cannot be. Sir, know you whom you
speak to,
That you dare hope to make me think I'm
doubted?

ARSENIO.

I would not willingly do this; but thus—
Read here, and be convinc'd.

*(Giving her a letter.)*

OLIVIA *(reading)*.

"Those which you shall give to Olivia an-
"nounce my coming distant: so let it be for
"her. To thee, my friend, I will confide, that
"a few hours shall join me to my letters. Be
"thou alone in Mantua known to this. Ex-
"cuse a lover's fancies, and believe me true in
"friendship."

'T is well; 't is very well: but I'll not weep.

ARSENIO.

Lady, I take my leave. Yet, ere I go,
Say that you do not frown. My honest thoughts
Were armed in indignation 'gainst Octavio,
And wonder at thy virtue.

OLIVIA.

That, as hence
I may find cause. Now, leave me to myself.

ARSENIO *(aside).*

Well, let this breed.—Lady, I take my leave.

[*Exit* ARSENIO.

OLIVIA *(alone).*

Despised! rejected! made a common puppet
For men to wonder at, and praise the toy
Which they would wear awhile!——I do forget me.
Give entrance to that suitor.——Do they think
We have no will, no thought, no power to act?——
She comes not yet.——Can we not say them nay?
Must every perfumed breath of flattery
Puff our weak hearts about from north to south,

And sap their best foundations?—[*Enter* JULIA.]
—Gentle suitor,
Such semblance is assurance of success.
To what mischance of thine stand I indebted
For this so fair a visit?

JULIA.

He I call
My brother, Gratiano, in this hour
Is forced to seek a refuge far from home.
An orphan sister kneels to beg for justice.
My brother is not guilty!

OLIVIA.

He was taken
In very act of violence. The Duke
Pronounced him guilty. Mantua's daughter
Cannot reverse his judgment.

JULIA.

Then farewell.
Gratiano's lost his country—I, my brother!
*(Going.)*

OLIVIA.

This were a merc'less state, inviting ill;
And tears would be but panders to new crimes,
If they could melt the sentence of the judge.

JULIA.

The judge can see but as the law directs,
Which, from contingent seemings, shews what's like,
And not what is. Such feeble monitors
Still their weak throats, when conscience says 't is false.

OLIVIA.

If thou would'st fly to mercy from the law,
Arsenio's the offended. Hast thou sought
To move him in thy cause?

JULIA.

Oh, not for worlds!

OLIVIA.

Indeed!—And wherefore so?

JULIA.

He is the foe,
The foe of Gratiano! He well knows
The temp'rate current of my brother's blood
Could not o'erflow to such a base intent,
Could not so err as thus.

OLIVIA.

But he's right loyal:
Hasty, or so. Yet, if I judge aright,

Thou hast withal to move the loyal Signor.
Such youth, such beauty, never plead in vain.

JULIA.

Spare this! Oh, spare it! Did you know me,
lady,
I'd say 't was cruel mockery!

OLIVIA.

Know thee!
Come, droop not so!—Oh yes, Arsenio's noble;
A trusty friend, a favourite of the fair;
And I dare swear, if once he said he lov'd,
He'd be most true and changeless.

JULIA.

This may be.
I have not found it so.

OLIVIA.

How! has he sworn
That he loved thee, too?

JULIA.

Oh, he often swore it;
And I, as oft, believed!

OLIVIA.

Oh, man, man, man!—

Go on, go on!—Come, gentle, sit thou here;
Tell me his falsehood, tell me all thy love.

JULIA.

I was not born to marry with Arsenio.
He sought my love, and won it; turned my thoughts
To rise above their source; made me believe
That I was worthy, worthy to be called
His wife.—The dove that nestles with the eagle
Shall rue her mate's caresses.

OLIVIA.

Ha, so bold
That no complexion daunts thee! Is this love
But instinct through the universal world,
That nature may not cease!—And what is reason,
But that which chooses for the gilded couch!
Yet man will boast of it.—Hast thou no proof
To shew thy brother guiltless?

JULIA.

Lady, none,

But in Arsenio's bosom; who well knows
At what a price I could have proved him
clear.

OLIVIA.

Why, this is worthy of Creation's lord,
Proud ruler of our destinies! Our honour,
Until he wins, he laughs at, then despises;
And makes his gilded triumph of the spoil:
And all the little engin'ry of beauty,
The form he rifles, and the mind he blasts,
He keeps to plume his pageant — Oh, most
shameless! —
And whirls our virtue at his chariot wheels
With exultations wild.—Be thou mine own!
All shall be well, my lovely.

JULIA.

Oh, these tears
Are all my power to thank you.

OLIVIA.

Let them flow!
The tears of woe oft are as dews, that fall
Upon some sad and sun-distempered seeds

The heedless winds had from their bosom scatter'd;
Which now, conceiving by the pregnant drops,
Load all the vagrant air with sweets, the sweeter,
That once we knew but anguish in the shower.
Weep, weep, my fair, and from thy tears spring grace!—
We 'll laugh at man, but man shall rue our smiles!

# ACT II.

## SCENE I.—*A Room in* CLAUDIO'S *House.*

*Enter* CLAUDIO *and* ANTONIO.

CLAUDIO.

Aye, but you 've known her changeful.

ANTONIO.

On my life,
I 've known her, as the violet in its prime,
Chast'ning the air she breathes. Around, about her,
On every side, is such eternal spring,
That the tun'd spheres might their enforced measures
Leave mute and motionless at such sweet season.

CLAUDIO.

A frank and bounteous spring! The youth of nature
Is when she quickens! Every eager wind
That kisses her young cheek is welcome to her!

ANTONIO.

Now, by my life, you wrong yourself to say it!

CLAUDIO.

She'd seem to love me; she would catch my humours.
Oh, there is much in these elastic fantasies
That bend and ply, and straight return again.
The self-same gambols that she played me with,
The self-same heart, mind, smile, and tongue,
Had served to trick Lord Angelo.

ANTONIO.

Wake not
The passionless cold dead. Affections are
As those they lie with; and sure-aiming Time
Levels at both alike.

CLAUDIO.

Out on't then!
She who could dote on him, as though no world
Had been but in his heart, to change thus soon!
There is nor love, nor surety, nor affection,
Nor truth, nor honesty, in such a will!

ANTONIO.

My friend, my friend, thou dost forget thyself!
And that, by long and hard importunacy,

Thou stoppedst the tears which twelve moons let to flow.
Thou then wouldst call it wayward stubbornness,
Th' irreverence and peevishness of grief.

CLAUDIO.

I found her bending at his monument,
More pale and colder than the Parian stone;
A statue motionless amid dead statues,
Living but in her griefs; whose eloquence
Moved me to wish I were so loved, so mourned.
I wooed; and when two years of sighs——Can sighs
Make thus past vows look pale? Can mouldering time
Eat from the tablet of the heart a name
Once written there?—Oh, hearts are hollow things!
I'll hence, Antonio; thou shalt tarry here.
Thou art a courtier; hast a soothing phrase;
A voice that languishes upon thy lips;
A moist and welkin eye; a gentle carriage;
With such soft smooth conceits as ladies love.

ANTONIO.

Further; what need of this?

CLAUDIO.

A Mantuan once,
Crossing a beaten track, found by its side
A goodly treasure; many deemed it so;
But 't was a thing of gawds. Men gazed at it,
And would have ta'en it. He, more wise than they,
Had one prov'd friend, a man of trust and skill,
Most studied in such qualities and tricks.
He gave it him for proof, who quickly found
'T was but a hollow toy; and what seem'd gold,
A flimsy cheat. Dost understand me, friend?

ANTONIO.

I have led tented battles in the field!
I have the perilous and grumbling mine,
Rattling his fiery entrails, laughed to scorn!
I have the light foam of the pond'rous sea
Lock'd in my bellying shrouds! — aye, more than this,
With unblanch'd cheek! But this—beware of it.—
I will not understand thee.

CLAUDIO.

I am he,
That Mantuan, who found—What shall I call it?
A treasure? Is 't indeed a treasure? So—
Wilt thou not be that trusty friend, Antonio,
Who shall approve it one?

ANTONIO.

Somewhat of this
I heard before; since then, such potent reasons,
Methought, had urged thee to a true belief—

CLAUDIO.

Reasons! nay, hold.—But see, Amanda comes:
I 'll break my purpose to her.

ANTONIO.

Claudio, stay
This fearful malady. Make not me the tool
To this wild fancy.

CLAUDIO.

Ha! thou fearest it then!
Yes, yes, he knows her worthless; nay, perhaps—

ANTONIO.

If that be all thy friendship, let me hence—

CLAUDIO.

And make another witness of my shame!
If thou hast honesty, or gentle friendship,
Be thy sole breast my grief's depository.

*Enter* AMANDA.

CLAUDIO.

If it were better now to live in palaces,
And share the gilded roof with every fop,
Than call a lonely peaceful cot one's own,
Why then I might sleep soundly.

AMANDA.

Gentle Claudio,
Whence is this busy motion? In the hall
Are unused preparations. What is this?

CLAUDIO.

Sweet, I must hence.

AMANDA.

And I but know it thus!
Going and gone, in the same breath to me!
Shall I not with thee?

CLAUDIO.

Not in such an hour!

AMANDA.

Why not in such an hour?

CLAUDIO.

Wars are abroad;
I 'm called upon; and 't is not meet a soldier
Should melt his courage in an amorous blaze.
The cries of women would too feebly mingle
With the stout soldier's shouts. Thou must remain.

AMANDA.

Then if I must—But thou must be most kind;
And with each motion that shall bear thee from me,
Dispatch a messenger on speed of thought
To tell me thou art happy—yet not happy;
And yet I would not have thee very sad;
But such a breach in thy true blessedness,
As I alone could perfect.—Oh, these wars
Will make me shed more tears than showers enough
To water all the laurels they will win.

CLAUDIO.

'T is our disuse that makes this parting strange.
Time heals all wounds that are not cureless
quite.

ANTONIO.

Most peerless and unparagon'd of ladies!
Since the first tears that parting lovers shed;
Since the first sighs that burst the fleshy con-
fines—

CLAUDIO.

Antonio goes not to these wars.

AMANDA.

Such friends
To part thus soon!

CLAUDIO.

He hath vocations here,
Which he must not depart from.

AMANDA.

Good, my Lord—
For I do spy in these unused motions,
Which you would darkly hide, unused thoughts—
Tell the strange cause of these so strange events.

CLAUDIO.

It is not so. Or, grant it; there are cares,

Which, in the ebb and shallow of our fate,
Beat with such riotous and roaring might
'Gainst our weak sides, that but the well-knit bark,
Whose ribs are of the male and manly oak,
Dares live in such a storm. Women are made
For sunshine holidays, and summer seas.

AMANDA.

The Roman Portia was of such a frame,
She feared no elements, and swallowed fire.

CLAUDIO.

Come, we must hence. And now, my lov'd Amanda—

AMANDA.

Farewell, my Lord, since you will have it so!

CLAUDIO.

Antonio, come with me. The time I have,
I 'd spend it in some conference with thee.
(*To* AMANDA.)—This, and no more. How long I may be hence,
Heaven's will dispose. How well I may come back,
To find all good things here, as good I leave them,

Look thou to heed. And, upon this, farewell!
All know they go, but none when they return.
Once more, farewell!

[*Exeunt* CLAUDIO *and* ANTONIO.

AMANDA *(alone).*

But none when they return!
Does Claudio say so? I have seen him lately
Of every jarring element, that makes
The flaws and disproportions of the world;
And all within the compass of a time
Too short for telling it. Upon his face
All fair things lie in broken perturbation;
Like to the chafed bosom of a lake,
Where nought is seen but storms. Wherefore is this?
For I have known him patient and enduring,
Meek with the meek, though cogent with the strong;
To each what best became him: for his worth,
Praise could not ornament or censure dim;
And, when he woo'd, no tongue misquoted him
But hers who envied.—

*Re-enter* CLAUDIO.

CLAUDIO.

Yet a word, Amanda.
The world's a many-headed Argus. Eyes,
More numb'red than the unseen stars which pave
The milky path in heaven, encounter us.
But Argus waked to watch; the world, to damn.
Then be thou chary. Fortune, fairness, youth,
Make censure bold, though even virtue guard it.
When I am gone, how wilt thou use the time?

AMANDA.

Soon as the day shall meet my opening eyes—

CLAUDIO.

Nay, 't is not that; but wilt thou then be merry;
Court blithsome playfulness, oblivious sports;
Seek, in the airy mazes of distraction,
To cheat the listlessness which cheated thee
To think thou wert unhappy? Some there be,
Not daring to abide with melancholy,
Draw it to shapes of an enforced mirth;
And push by sorrow with so rude a hand,
That they o'erthrow the majesty of grief;

And all the dignity of sufferance lose
In riotous outdoings.—Speak, Amanda!

AMANDA.

My silence best were suited to such matter.
What tongue so bold, so hasty, or so black,
Dares paint me of this colour?

CLAUDIO.

None, Amanda.

AMANDA.

Then let the world look on me; all men's eyes
Be bent on me alone. Let them report me,
As of some tressed comet in the sky,
Importing fiery death. I 'll bare my heart,
That they may judge my weightiest thought of wrong.

CLAUDIO.

A heavy world, that judgeth oft too lightly.

AMANDA.

Or I 'll forswear the trodden path of men,
And live with my own thoughts.

CLAUDIO.

That 's perilous.
To sequestrate the dear and thinking soul
From its blest fellows! this fair-peopled world

To make a desert of! Such loneness is
The pamper'd nurse of misconceived affections,
And feeds them with her foulness; while the spirit
Grows rank within. Mark when we sit alone,
By hill or valley, forest, mead, or fount,
Or by the rocky murmur of a stream,
Where wild winds make neglectful harmony,
With what retentive might our spirits bound?
Our properties and natures grow thrice over,
Trebly themselves; and all their hues do colour
Our secret'st workings. Not of all our tribe,
Could one escape the tainture. And shall woman,
With less to sway, and more that would be swayed?
Hast thou no thought that might o'ermaster thee?

AMANDA.

None that I fear.

CLAUDIO.

Why this is wond'rous bold;
The best of us may tremble.

AMANDA.

When my lord

Has aught that I may question, I'll attend him;
Meanwhile I crave his pardon to withdraw.

[*Exit.*

CLAUDIO *(alone).*

Who but myself would not be happy now!
That she is true and gentle, fair and honest,
The rudest breath that winnows our light chaff
Cannot blow from her. Aye, but I 'm her fool.
She loved Lord Angelo. Can she, who wept him
With tears which holy angels should have caught
In sacred vials, give a heart to me?
One heaven, one heart, one nature, and one love!
Well, I will know my wretchedness and shame,
And then farewell to her and Mantua!

## SCENE II.—*A Street in Mantua.*

*Enter* OCTAVIO *and* ETHELBERT.

OCTAVIO.

Well, we shall prove the pow'r of Mantuan beauty
To wean thee from thy isle.

ETHELBERT.

For loves like thine.

OCTAVIO.

Be well possessed of every circumstance
Ere you pronounce. 'T is certain she mistrusts me;
And that 't is so is anguish to my soul:
But wherefore 't is seems past my reach of thought.

ETHELBERT.

Nay, that in woman's nature may be found,
And quick-conceiving breasts; whose first wish is
To plight their faith:—their second is to break it.

OCTAVIO.

'T is most profane to hear thee. Sir, Olivia's
As much above the rest of woman-kind,
As thy base thoughts have wrong'd her!

ETHELBERT.

So are all
At our first starting in the amorous chase;
Yet still we find them end in very woman.

OCTAVIO.

But she I love is single of her sex.

ETHELBERT.

Aye, every lover thinks his mistress one;
The ones of every lover form the whole.—
But to be serious. I have heard you speak
Of one Arsenio, a most loyal friend;
Doubtless a paragon, as she, of truth.
Did he not use to send you certain tidings,
And wave the signal of her hourly seeming?

OCTAVIO.

'T is true, Arsenio has not been so studious
As he was wont, to keep my hopes from sinking.
But what of that? He loves almost as I do;
And the first-fruits of marriage claim the hours
His friendship once engrossed.

ETHELBERT.

He loves, and marriage!
Give me to hear that tale, I like it well.

OCTAVIO.

Some two years past, Arsenio woo'd a maid
Of peerless worth; and rich in every gift,
Save those which catch the frozen wish of age:
Therefore he lov'd and was belov'd in vain.

His father's fond ambition fain had seen him
The wealthiest, not the happiest lord of Mantua.
His faith remained unshaken. Very oft
I've borne a sigh, or posted with a tear,
Reflecting distant comfort 'twixt the lovers.

ETHELBERT.

And the good father, obdurate though kind,
Has doubtless healed his wounds with gentle pain;
While she—

OCTAVIO.

Doubtless! these doubts are most injurious.
He, sir, obedient to his father's will,
Spoke not of love; but, faithful to his Julia,
He kept it secret in his bosom. She
Smiled or was sad, as son or sire prevailed.

ETHELBERT.

This savours not of wedlock, not with Julia.
But to the rest.

OCTAVIO.

The only rest I know
Is, that some late dispatches from Arsenio
Were lines of sorrow for his father's death.

The next shall be, if so my prayers can prosper,
His hand is joined where long his heart was
treasur'd.

ETHELBERT.

When I behold them join'd, I'll think it true.
Thy Mantuan sun enthusiastic brains
Fills with fair fancies; makes the mind to teem
With golden prospects; spreads beneath your
feet
Profusion of sweet flowers.

OCTAVIO.

While thy damp north
Rolls a thick vapour 'twixt thy eyes and heaven;
And, in a veil of gloom, hides every flower
That strews thy path of life.—But lo, Arsenio.

*Enter* ARSENIO.

OCTAVIO.

Next to the mistress of my heart, welcome
what I hold most dear in Mantua.

ARSENIO.

And, but to her who reigns there, to none
more welcome thou in Mantua.

OCTAVIO.

After me, let thy love be shewn here (*pointing to* ETHELBERT). I do commend him to thy bosom. Let him be well known to thee: so shall my judgment suffer no default in your esteem. You will find him one who does not wear his virtues as a cloak to his demerits; but whose foibles are the willing foils to virtues which he is not anxious to discover.

ARSENIO.

It is the privilege of friendship to share its treasures, and by the partition to become the richer. Sir, without prejudice to the elder right of Octavio, we may style ourselves friends.

ETHELBERT.

Sir, our island is defended by a sort of white cliff of most giddy footing; steep of ascent, and barren. When you 've climbed this, you 'll find the soil is pleasant, rich, and indeed blest with most rare endowments. I have been told our islanders are something like our isle.

OCTAVIO.

This is but the humour of his countrymen, who, being told that we of the south do profess

more than we perform, will credit us in less than we intend.—But how has it fared, Arsenio, with thy love? Give us its history, since the day thou brokest the thread of it to me.

ARSENIO.

'T is brief and empty. When my father died, the brother of my Julia, thinking the time tedious till his stock became engrafted with nobility, sought to punish what he deemed my delay, and attempted at my life. Gratiano was sent into exile; Julia weeps her brother's rashness; and my heart is returned into my bosom.

OCTAVIO.

Not so surely, that Julia may not again possess it. Come, come, we must mend all. But first for present business. Friends, both, I leave you. Farewell for a little.—And now Olivia! [*Exit* OCTAVIO.

ARSENIO.

Sir, have you known what strange suspicions haunt our friend's mind as to his mistress? It appears he has not in her virtue that full confidence her virtue merits.

ETHELBERT.

Confidence, truly! I know not. But he does best who has the least on 't.

ARSENIO.

And wherefore so? Such thoughts are libels against human nature.

ETHELBERT.

They may be so. But be thou confident,
Think every man what he would have thee think him,
It were damnation worldly; aye, so deep
That angels could not care it.

ARSENIO.

Yet even thus,
I'd rather meet th' assassin once, than dream
I met him always. Heaven defend my soul
From such a shapeless demon as Suspicion!
Come, will you walk, sir? [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.—OLIVIA's *Apartment.*

*Enter* OLIVIA *and* OCTAVIO.

OLIVIA.

How weak, Octavio, are all the resolves of a lover. Even pride, that oft is guardian of a woman's honour, is subdued by love. And now let us bury the remembrance of all else.

OCTAVIO.

How shall I thank thee, fairest, best Olivia!
Let speechless raptures, truer than the phrase
Of meddling eloquence, betwixt our hearts
Be all the messengers.—Oh, my Olivia!

OLIVIA.

You need no more to satisfy you of Arsenio's guilt?

OCTAVIO.

Truly, no.

OLIVIA.

And you consent to all I have imparted to you?

OCTAVIO.

To all thou canst devise, I yield me willingly. But is Julia still of the same gentle nature as when I was the advocate of their loves?

OLIVIA.

She is, indeed, most gentle. She is stationed between nobility and lowness, far enough from either to escape the pride of the one and the baseness of the other; yet near enough to both to possess the courtesy that should sweeten a proud fortune, and the grace that should support an humble one.

OCTAVIO.

And is she so pliant to the instructions thou givest her, that no fault of hers will mar her fortunes or thy plot?

OLIVIA.

She's one so roughly tutored by Misfortune,
That she but smiles at such unmeaning crosses
As Fortune's minion weeps at.—

Lo, Octavio, here comes my fool. A little measure of profit, with a full measure of praise, will lead this man as far as the web which nature has spun for him will allow. Do you

withdraw awhile. I must give him this letter, and he shall convey it with all the mystery of forbidden love to Arsenio. That done, I'll follow thee, and use thy counsel for the rest.

[*Exit* OCTAVIO.

Pietro, Pietro—(*enter* PIETRO)—This coxcomb is already so full of his several functions, that he thinks himself the very point upon which all difficulties and consequences are heaped—Hast thou the will to serve me?

PIETRO.

Most undeniably and authentically the best will, best lady.

OLIVIA.

And the means, too, Pietro?

PIETRO.

First, I must learn the manner of it.

OLIVIA.

Aye, but thy office in the state, how would that suffer, wert thou to stoop thy mind to do a woman's bidding.

PIETRO.

Thou art thyself a part of it, as being issue to the state's governor.

OLIVIA.

There's little state in this I'd have thee do.
It is a woman's thrift thou must perform.

PIETRO.

Nay, I fear nought that thou canst put me to.
I can speak bold upon occasions; aye,
And swagger with my tongue.

OLIVIA.

Not lack of speech
I dread in thee. Canst thou be silent, secret?
Sit with loud talkers, and command thy voice
To wise and just discretion?

PIETRO.

Else no statesman.
I'll be inexplicably dull and dumb,
As a saint's calendar without a legend.

OLIVIA.

And hast thou thought thee what a tender thing
Is woman's reputation? Oh how frail!
That, if it 'scape the storm, the sun doth fade it?
That, if it fall not by untimely crosses,
The elements that nourished its young seed
Do make it grow to bursting? Know'st thou
this?

PIETRO.

'Tis admirably said. Indeed I know it;
Not thus, but yet the same.

OLIVIA.

Then I may trust thee.
This little paper thou must convey with the most diligent speed to Arsenio. None must know of it, not even my father. All but thou might put such forced construction on the deed as would strain my fair repute.

PIETRO.

To Arsenio! Arsenio?—Octavio—

OLIVIA.

Hush, not a word of him. Come hither, and hear me. It must be done secretly. As secretly must thou bring back what he will give thee; and if he marvel at thy caution, why then—

PIETRO.

Then, Madam—

OLIVIA.

Why then thou may'st not say I so bespoke it, but on the most eager demand. Report all faithfully, and thou shalt have no cause to re-

gret thy diligence hath been so employed. But silence, silence! [*Exit* OLIVIA.

PIETRO.

I am dumb; thyself hath taken from me the use of speech. To Arsenio this, and secretly!—Here's what his looks have come to, and his sighs, and his leers. I thought it. But that the invitation should come from her! This exceeds my most rank conceptions of the sex. And Octavio!—But its no affair of mine: mine's to be silent. But my thoughts!—Oh, fulsome, fulsome. [*Exit*.

# ACT III.

## SCENE I.— *A Gallery in* ARSENIO'S *House.*

*Enter* PIETRO.

PIETRO.

That the Duke should have to speak with the Lord Arsenio, is most like: that the most confident inmate of his bosom should bear his word, is yet no harm: that Pietro should be here, stands upon no grounds of suspicion: therefore 't is well yet. But eyes will be prying, tongues will utter, and ears will receive; so, for the sake of caution, it were as well not to be seen here. The intent does make me coward. Yonder he passes. Hist—Sir—My Lord Arsenio—

*Enter* ARSENIO.

ARSENIO.

Who calls?—Ha, friend Pietro—

PIETRO.

Thy friend as thou shalt find it. Here's a challenge!

ARSENIO.

A challenge! I know of none I have offended.

PIETRO.

Are there no challenges but upon offence? Here; let the mild character of the superscription bid thy valour doff its armour.

*(Giving a letter.)*

ARSENIO.

Ha! mild indeed. It is Olivia's.

PIETRO.

Hush! let not thy breath take such a form again. Never utter the word, but in murmurs upon her lips.

ARSENIO *(having read).*

Oh sweet! Oh exquisite! What, Pietro, shalt thou have for this?—But is it true? It cannot be: it is too exquisite; too full a measure of content. Art thou sure of this?

PIETRO.

Of what, my noblest Signor?

ARSENIO.

Of this! of this! Dost thou not know?

PIETRO.

Nay, my lord, I know many things that are, and are most exquisite. But of this—I have, indeed, seen the shell of it; but you, it seems, have cracked it for the kernel.

ARSENIO.

Who gave thee this, this prologue to more sweetness?

PIETRO.

The most beautiful Lady Olivia.

ARSENIO.

Indeed, Olivia! When—where—how?

PIETRO.

The when, some hour ago; the where, in her own chamber; the how, I blush to say most guiltily.

ARSENIO.

Oh lovely guilt! guilt fairer than the snows
That top the hoary Caucasus at night!
More spicy than the loaded Arab wind
That chafes the very pole!

PIETRO.

All was secrecy. But, pardon me, I must not say that. 'T was well commanded me not to say so, unless compelled to it by most eager demand.

ARSENIO.

In very truth! she bad thee, then, be silent!
Was it her voice that spoke, her lips that moved!
Did not the air catch perfumes from her breath!
Say, didst thou watch her gracious motion?—
Speak!

PIETRO.

My lord, I never have such fancies but when I am commanded to it.

ARSENIO.

Wilt thou bear to thy fair lady what I shall give thee?

PIETRO.

What you speak, I will report; what you shall indite, I will carry.

ARSENIO *(having written.)*

Here, here; mere words would scorch the

very paper. Here. Say to her, besides, that I will attend her most devoutly. Begone, and say it. [*Exit* ARSENIO.

PIETRO *(alone).*

So, so; to what new office am I put now? Nay, the office is an old one, though I am somewhat young at it. 'T is strange. Well, ice is made to melt in fire: but that I should blow the coals—This grows more and more fulsome. [*Exit.*

## SCENE II.—CLAUDIO'*s House.*

*Enter* AMANDA *and* ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

Hold me so guiltless in your fair esteem,
That from mine own device I have not wrought,
But bound to it by oath.

AMANDA.

I am so pure,

So free in mine own thoughts, that I call down
The eye of Heaven to judge me. Can you say
The cause that warps my lord thus?

ANTONIO.

Gentle lady,
Put me not to it. Yet I am so bound
In all affections to your noble natures,
That what I can, that will I risk to join you
In your true loves and happiness together.

AMANDA.

Is Claudio jealous?

ANTONIO.

Some would say he is not,
As fearing none on earth; nor could he name
The man he holds his rival.

AMANDA.

Yet you 'd say
Claudio is jealous.

ANTONIO.

Is it to be jealous,
To hold you as a pure and holy temple,
Most unpolluted? Is it to be jealous,
To give you liberal course, and free dispose

Of every act? nay, to command your presence
To one he bids to sue you? Is this jealousy?
Yet on my life I think Claudio is jealous.

AMANDA.

Alas, and wherefore so? I was so slow
To find a cause in me, I found not this.

ANTONIO.

Must I revive dead sorrows?—Angelo—

AMANDA.

And what of him?

ANTONIO.

Lord Angelo pursues him.

AMANDA.

Alas, he's dead.

ANTONIO.

And that 'alas' would join
The living Claudio to dead Angelo.

AMANDA.

He was the first love of my early days,
And my betrothed. I grieve for him as one
Who should have been my lord.

ANTONIO.

And that's too much.

AMANDA.

But I love Claudio as my living lord.

ANTONIO.

Mark how he's jealous. Not with such conceits
As blacken him who owes, and her who breeds them;
Not with corrupted fancies or foul dreams,
That drop contagion on the love begets them;
But with such workings as this tainted world
Change to ethereal essence.

AMANDA.

How is this?

ANTONIO.

And were that form and mortal stuff dissolved,
Still there were food for Claudio's jealousy.

AMANDA.

Oh ecstasy of sorrow! Jealousy,
That never counsel takes but of itself,
Never so wandered. Had he found me free,
I could have put restraint on my behaviour;
Or full of speech, I had become as marble;
Or taxed me with unseemly wild desires,

I could have set my mind in such a compass
Not to distaste him. Had I danced, moved, sung,
I could have frozen the offending blood
That made the motions. Were my crime but living,
I could have doomed it. Oh, but this, but this!
It is a shadow's shadow, and a dream
Of all mad dreams in one.

(CLAUDIO *enters behind, unseen.*)

CLAUDIO *(aside).*

So close, so close!

ANTONIO.

I'll kiss that hand, and leave you. I must hence.
There is no safety to my tarrying here.
The jealousy that bad me to this proof
Never more holds me guiltless. Fare thee well.

CLAUDIO *(aside).*

He woos her in good sooth!—Well, what of that?
He must do so, or he is much forsworn;
He must not do so, or he's more forsworn.

AMANDA.

Now by the beating of an honest heart,
And by what good men owe to truth, I charge
you
Stir not from here until to Claudio's breast
That truth shall strike.

CLAUDIO *(aside)*.

Ha! is not this most monstrous!

ANTONIO.

Such love as binds me Claudio's, even with such
Is my soul thine. And prize not less my friend-
ship,
For that the hand of mellow-paced Time
Hath not the wild shoots of its infancy
Plucked from the stem and body of its root.
Oh there be spots upon the wings of Time,
Like meteors on the pitchy face of night,
That shine resplendent off. Occasions, chances,
And all the steeled rubs of this hard world,
Are Fortune's tools whereby she fashions us;
And, from the bulk of our great natures, strikes
Such fiery sparks and flashes of high worth,
As sober day owes not. I have gone through

This brake unscath'd, and what remains of life
Is dedicated yours.

CLAUDIO *(advancing)*.

Oh woman! traitor!
A perjur'd traitor! woman most forsworn!
The sprites of hell surround, encompass you!
And with their sooty arms shake chains upon you
Shall scorch your fiery loins. Oh how I'll curse you!

AMANDA.

Claudio, how now?

CLAUDIO.

How now, thou spotted fiend
I once thought pure as snow! How now! Even so
As I have wished to be. Aye, now and ever!

ANTONIO.

What is this fury?

CLAUDIO.

Dost thou ask it, traitor?
The plague of doubting on thee! fears, suspicions
File all thy mind, and stretch it till it crack.

For ease, seek confirmation. When it comes,
Wish you could doubt again; and be you then
As I am now. What shall I say to curse you?

AMANDA.

Alas, he's past all cure that will not hearken.
If you had ta'en a wound upon your bosom,
Or felt an aching limb or a sick qualm;
Nay, had but chafed the skin upon your hand,
You'd not reject who brings you medicine.
You have a raging and a violent wound
Given to your soul; yet dash the chalice down
That would send health to you.

CLAUDIO.

A poison'd chalice!
I've drunk too deep of it! A common cup,
Where every one may ply his slaver'd lips!
Oh, heaven, to think on't!

ANTONIO.

Cannot innocence
Outclamour such suspicions? Claudio, hear me.
You've wronged a sweet and most deserving wife,
Whose virtue scorns suspicion, but whose love

Cannot abide with it. Lo, there she stands,
A fair rose blasted in its prime of sweetness,
And cropt for too much worth. So free and chaste,
That what she fires she quenches, the same motion
Begetting love and wonder; such a creature
As earth not paragons, for there is none
So harmonis'd as she.

CLAUDIO.

Oh, well-timed passion,
That shews me what you are, and the fresh gloss
Of a new toy. But time hath given me reason,
And I behold a blighted, withered weed,
That blossom'd fair—but, oh, whose fruit is poison!

ANTONIO.

Look up, most injur'd lady, whom great Heaven
Will not abandon now.

CLAUDIO.

Before my face!
I 'll rip that bosom, that the world may see

How looks a strumpet's heart!

*(Runs to her with his dagger. She screams, having received a slight wound which* CLAUDIO *does not perceive.)*

My arm is weak,
And my strong nerve is coward at her voice.
Oh, smiling Death!—Take thou this dagger from me;
Fling it but to the ground; if thou art false,
My wrongs shall dash thee on its point. Hang it
With adamant above thine head; thy guilt,
That rives the strong affections of the world,
Shall pluck it down. Or wear it in thy bosom;
When thou shalt hear how sad a thing, how wretched,
How lost, I wander'd—Oh, 't will make me mad!

[*Throws his dagger at her feet, and exit.*

ANTONIO.

Alas, she faints!—Oh calumny, more heavy
Than murd'rous lead, hath stung her.—Lo, she breathes!
How fares it, beauteous virtue?

AMANDA.

Very ill;
And ill at heart, too.—Claudio, where art thou?

ANTONIO.

I'll follow, and detain him.

AMANDA.

Do not so.
I'll wear his unjust wrath by my obedience.
I will be patient as I have been true:
Give way to him. When husbands rage unjustly,
Wives win by gentleness.—Give me that dagger.

ANTONIO.

Oh piteous sight! What precious drops do hang
Upon its blade.

AMANDA.

'T is his last gift, Antonio.
He bad me wear it in my bosom here.
And see, the rude acquaintance they have ta'en
Doth make it dearer.

ANTONIO.

And what streams of blood

Flow from thine innocent heart.

AMANDA.

A scratch, Antonio,
Not felt 'mid the soul's racks, the eye sees not:
And there is potent medicine for such wounds,
But none to stop my tears. And even now
Their source is made the richer, with the grief
That I must bid thee hence.

ANTONIO.

Dare I not stay
To be your slave? to watch, to kneel by you?

AMANDA.

No, not an hour. Though chastity be sweet,
Yet the world's breath can taint it. Fair repute
Is that which makes it sweeter. She doth wrong
Herself and virtue, knowing she is chaste,
That shews her honour in such paltry garbs
As wantons use. Were I as Claudio says,
What could I more than so?—Farewell, Antonio.
This morning I was happy; and this even
I stand the most forlorn, dejected wretch!

But heaven that sees my ills will do me right;
Till the which hour I'll walk in heaven's blest
sight. [*Exit* AMANDA.

ANTONIO.

Oh day of woe! That men will be so bold
To make that true, which true brings ruin to
them!
Alas, alas, I've seen too much of this.
Ere Claudio had reserved me to this trial,
He should have proved me more or less than
man.
Amanda peerless! would I had not known it!
Strengthen my soul, great Heav'n! Oh kill in it
All-beauteous sense, and make it barren, with-
ered!
For better were a human block, a stone,
Than what I dread. Stand 'twixt my heart and
me
With thy strong armour. If it be love I feel,
As I do fear it is, it is a crime
To be of such a weak and feeling stuff
As I am made of.—Come time as it may,
The task be mine to mend this broken day.
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in the Duke's Palace lighted up. Masks, &c.*

*Enter* OCTAVIO *and* ETHELBERT *masked.* OCTAVIO *as a Friar.*

ETHELBERT.

Nay, never tell me of this. I cannot, in the true affection of my love, see it, and not tell thee how much thou art abused.

OCTAVIO.

Well, thyself shall be the judge whether she perform not every act of our stipulation as agreed upon. She shall speak with Arsenio, give a meeting to him in masks to feed his passion, and substitute Julia in her room. Julia shall marry with Arsenio; and my honour, or the love of my mistress, suffer no impeachment.

ETHELBERT.

And thou wouldst have me stand by, and be a witness to thy disgrace?

OCTAVIO.

If it fall not out as I promise thee, I will away with thee this night from Mantua, forswear all relation to it, and forget my love and friendships there: but, if it prove otherwise, promise me that thou wilt afford hospitality in thy bosom to thoughts more worthy of thy excellent nature.

ETHELBERT.

I say agreed, to all. But here come the maskers.

*Enter various maskers. A dance. Then enter* OLIVIA *and* JULIA *as pilgrims, in dresses of different colours, followed by* ARSENIO *in a domino.*

ARSENIO.

It cannot be for any sin of thine, fair pilgrim, that thou art doomed to penance.

OLIVIA.

And wherefore not for any sin of mine? I am not too young to have committed many.

ARSENIO.

Jove loves such sinners. But of what hast thou been guilty?

OLIVIA.

Of every sin that woman can commit, and man no accomplice in it. I am proud when I win, humble when I sue, gentle when I lure, cruel when I'm woo'd. I put vestments on my limbs, and hide all my comeliness from all men, but an indifferent face, which I've heard praised, yet had not charity to believe the praiser.

ARSENIO.

May I be judge 'twixt thee and thy uncharitableness?

OLIVIA.

No, sir; for these things do I hold sufficient to demand seclusion.

ARSENIO.

I'd cite thee into Cupid's court, but that the

wily god would not dare to award against thee.

OLIVIA.

Arsenio!

ARSENIO.

Ha!

OLIVIA.

Hush! *(They talk aside.)*

OCTAVIO *(to* JULIA*)*.

The gentleness of all thy wishes bless thee.

JULIA.

I 'm bent on holy shrift; the gods go with me!
But thinks't thou, father, that there be in heav'n
Such store of mercy, that these nether ills
Have not spent all?

OCTAVIO.

Doubt it not, holy pilgrim.
Heaven, that made wayward man, gave thus much mercy;
That every sin should have his shroud of it,
And be interred forgotten. They 've not prayed
For it, who have not found it.

OLIVIA *(to* ARSENIO*)*.

Do this, and I will hear thee. Be prepared

to meet me here in the instant with the assurance I ask, that thou wilt marry Julia forthwith, and I'll grant thy mad petition.

ARSENIO.

Exact of me what penance, pilgrimage—

OLIVIA.

No, nought but this. No time for thought. We must part even here, and now or never.

ARSENIO.

Come what come may, I'll do it.

OLIVIA.

'T is well. I will find the means to lose this lady. She is a stranger here, but of high blood in Venice.

[*Exeunt* OLIVIA *and* JULIA *on one side*, ARSENIO *on the other.*)

*Manent* ETHELBERT *and* OCTAVIO.

ETHELBERT.

See how she held him. I tell thee, Octavio, had I inclined to thy belief before, this had made a sceptic of me. What wilt thou say, when thou seest her outdo the very exigency and true want of feigned courtesy?

OCTAVIO.

That she plays her part beyond the slow pace of our conceptions; and that we cannot keep time in our minds with the excellency of her actions.

ETHELBERT.

Oh, dull and slow conceptions are thine, truly. Our country notion, then, is wrong of your southern warmth; which, as we think, can kindle passion from a spark to blaze ere we can say, 'behold!' It is not so, and you must be taught by a Briton.

OCTAVIO.

If thou wouldst say we must be taught jealousy, thou deceivest thyself. Jealousy is a plant of hotter growth; and, when it meets the cold breath of the north, 't is frozen into suspicion.—But come, we have yet much to observe. Here are the maskers.

*Enter various Maskers, dance, &c. — then Enter* ARSENIO *(a paper in his hand).*

ARSENIO.

'T is done, and I'll not think on't. Here is the scroll

That binds me to my fate. Well, what of that?
I sought it once. Why, very true; but then
I had not known Olivia. The conditions
Must make all sweet. Ye heavens, one little hour!
Aye, think on that; fill all thy mind with that;
And let to-morrow furnish for itself.

*Enter* OLIVIA *and* JULIA, *having exchanged dresses with each other; and* OCTAVIO.

OLIVIA *(to* OCTAVIO*)*.

You follow still with such unbent petition,
I grieve to think it bootless to a pilgrim.
The utmost alms my charity can give
Are prayers and blessings.

OCTAVIO.

Shall I doff this cowl,
And change it for a helmet? Of these sables,
I'll make a gallant armour; of my beads,
A brazen gorget; and my feeble crosier
Shall be a beechen lance: my noiseless prayers

I'll barter for the swagg'ring roar of Mars,
If that a soldier be preferred to hope.

[*During this speech,* JULIA *leaves* OLIVIA, *and exit with* ARSENIO, *who has given her the paper he held in his hand.*]

*Enter* ETHELBERT.

ETHELBERT.

Oh, excellent! Come, no more trifling; leave this mummery. Come, come, quit Mantua. If thou wouldst not add the name of break-promise to the shame that others put upon thee, come away.

OCTAVIO.

How now, Ethelbert, what means this?

ETHELBERT.

It means that thou art abused by the very square and rule of what I told thee. She is gone. I saw her. Arsenio led her out.

OCTAVIO.

This is not so.

ETHELBERT.

Not so; this is not so! Come with me, and

if Venus lend not some friendly cloud to cover her votaries, they shall be found.

OCTAVIO.

I say this is not so.

OLIVIA.

What, sir, may this mean? This gentleman is in trouble. Think'st thou the orisons of a holy pilgrim may help him to his quiet?

ETHELBERT.

Aye, you're one of them. A woman cannot be a simple offender, but she must draw others into her eddy. You cannot walk single in the path of evil. You must have crowds to gaze at your vanity, accomplices to share the joy of your iniquity, and confederates to titter at the success of your lures. Your person is your idol, and you seek to extend the worship. Yet the idol we behold is but the image of another idol. The face you shew is not your own; the eyes you leer with have learned such gambols as nature never taught. In one word, you are just foul and fair enough for the one to make the other your perdition.

OLIVIA.

Have you never known any in whom fairness and foulness did so meet and conjoin, as to form one whom nature need not grieve at, or art disown?

ETHELBERT.

Why all this talking? Come, wilt thou forswear thy word?

OCTAVIO.

I 'll not forswear it, yet I will not go.

ETHELBERT.

Then stay, and live the dupe of this fair-seeming Olivia. All the torments her ill deeds can bring, and she is most fertile in evil, attend thee! She needs no less fair an outside to cloak her inward foulness; and may they be unchangeable!

OLIVIA (*unmasking*).

Sir, give her leave to thank you, in her own person, for the care you have taken of her lord's honour and of her own renown. She thanks you, above all, for this last prayer for the welfare of her beauty.

ETHELBERT.

How now! what new cheat, what illusion?

OLIVIA.

No cheat, no illusion, but substantial honesty. This hand is real, and here it is a real pledge of love.

ETHELBERT.

I 'm struck with dumbness!

OCTAVIO.

Well, friend, what say'st thou now? Is my Olivia true?

ETHELBERT.

I must believe so far. But was not Arsenio false?

OCTAVIO.

Most false and perjur'd. But what of that?

ETHELBERT.

He is a wise philosopher, the half of whose knowledge is true; but he is still wiser who knows half the truth. But come, unravel.

OCTAVIO.

Thou hast heard how Arsenio followed her with love, and tempted her to anticipate the breakage of the marriage vow. Thou hast heard

of Julia, too, and his past vows to her. Olivia seemed to comply, but Julia holds her place; and hence the transmigration of form, and maskery in masking.

OLIVIA.

And from this counterfeit we'll have much joy.
Arsenio shall be saved from further ill,
And Julia righted bravely.

OCTAVIO.

Haste away;
The double rites attend us. He is bound,
And cannot 'scape. My dearest love, 't is ours
To lead the way. Soft music wake our joys.

[*Exeunt.*

# ACT IV.

## SCENE I.—*An Apartment in* ARSENIO'S *House.*

*Enter* ARSENIO.

ARSENIO.

Well, if there be a sum of happiness
Destin'd to each at's birth, let mine be ta'en
From every several hour to form one moment.
And such I've known; Olivia taught it me.—
Yet I am happy now, oh wondrous happy!
The world would say so of me. I am wived
With gentleness itself.—I lov'd her once.
'T is to be very happy.—[*Enter* JULIA.]—Thou art gentle,
Tender, and kind. I was about to think
With mine own heart of this; but thou art come.
Is it not true that I am very happy?

JULIA.

I hope so, dear my lord.

ARSENIO.

Dear lord! 't is so.
And thou art happy, too?

JULIA.

I dare not say it.
I have no joy but that I catch from thee.

ARSENIO.

Oh, then, be wondrous merry.

JULIA.

Sir, I dare not.
Thy mirth is in thy words, not in thy looks:
And heavy words, with heavy looks, were fitter
Than such discordant gambols of the tongue.

ARSENIO.

It will grow better. Thou art such, my Julia,
As must amend the vagrancy of blood,
And fix it—fix it.

JULIA.

Do not thus commend me.
Cold praise speaks my deserts as cold, deserving
None, if not thy love.

ARSENIO.

How long is it now
Since I am thine?

JULIA.

Since first thou swor'st it to me,
'T is longer than I 'll say. Since last—

ARSENIO *(half aside)*.

Too soon,
Too soon!

JULIA.

Why dost thou start thus? Oh, my lord,
If there be aught wherein I have offended,
Give me to know it. If too proud I bear
My new-advanced fortunes, doth this motion
Become them more? Am I too bold of speech?
Frugal or free of converse? How is it,
By what, in what err I? It shall go hard
But thou shalt find in me an humble learner.
But do not frown that I am what I am,
Merely because 't is so. Tell me my fault.

ARSENIO.

I think thou hast none. Will not that suffice?

JULIA.

Indeed! Then I can't mend.

ARSENIO.

Sweet simpleton!—
Go to, be merry. Take no thought of this.
I'd have thee smile; and, when thy husband's sad,
Season his sadness with such sweet atonements
As 'witch him from his thoughts. [*Exit* JULIA.
It is this sameness
That palls, that sickens. I might yet drudge on,
Aye, and this joyless cheek grow plump again,
If there were aught to fillip the dull blood
From its old onward course.

*Enter* OCTAVIO.

OCTAVIO.

So, so; here is news for both of us. We are a pair, indeed, of such accomplished dolts as the world never knew till ourselves. We were born to shew what beasts men can be made. Oh devils, and worse than ten thousand devils!

ARSENIO.

What is this? I never heard a bridegroom

visits us when the sweetness of the deed is past—Well sir, she sir, she hath confessed all.

ARSENIO.

All!—What—how—with whom? Oh, but this alarms me!

OCTAVIO.

All, all; for it is all when I know the injury so fixed upon me that nought can wipe it out. As for the instrument of her foulness, what matters it whether the prince or the beggar—

ARSENIO.

I breathe again *(aside)*.—But truly, what both, both foul! not one honest between them! I say again, this cannot be. Julia! she whom I have known from childhood, followed, woo'd as soon as known! No, that's a charm that cannot be destroyed. I was to blame not to have prized her better.

OCTAVIO.

My wife knew all, saw all, contrived all!

ARSENIO.

Thy wife contrived all! nay, then there's no relief.

OCTAVIO.

Ha, how is this? Hadst thou a forethought of my wife's disloyalty, and didst not speak of it to me?

ARSENIO.

I know not what I spoke. Good Octavio, I 'll not believe it of either.

OCTAVIO.

What, not with their own confession?

ARSENIO.

Mine has not confessed aught.

OCTAVIO.

Speak to her of it. They had resolved to own it, if we accused them. But mine being the bolder, or the weaker, outran my suspicion, and spoke before I asked.

*Enter* JULIA.

ARSENIO.

Julia, my Julia, thou wilt answer nay;
I prithee do so; aye, it must be nay;
It is so. Speak; is it not so, my Julia?

JULIA.

To what, my lord?

ARSENIO.

To this, to this, my sweet;
To this device of his.

JULIA.

Give me to hear it;
And to the surest of my thoughts I'll answer,
Though death do follow it.

ARSENIO.

This is enough.
I seek no more. My dearest, gentlest wife!

OCTAVIO.

Dull dotard, can it be! Now hear me question.—My wife—

ARSENIO.

Thy wife is sunk; and, in her drowning,
Clings to the fairest angel of the skies.

OCTAVIO.

Hath confessed all.

JULIA.

Ha!

ARSENIO.

What, pale! I prithee

Recal that wand'ring colour to thy cheek;
It doth infect me.

OCTAVIO.

But another word.
A maiden bride wert thou? Oh no, 't is clear;
Her cheek is paler than becomes her virtue.

ARSENIO.

Hold, semblance damn'd of what thou 'rt most unlike!
But yet I will not.—Live—Avoid my sight—
Oh, death, what strong temptation! How, still near me!

*Enter* OLIVIA.

OLIVIA.

Give me a word or two that I be heard.
I come not to extenuate my fault,
But that it may be known. There is in guilt
This precious remedy, that, being told,
It scares the hearers. Give me patient hearing.—
Arsenio, thou hast known how I was tried;
My faith was strained, and all the qualities

Of a subdued and very loyal love
Stolen from itself and its true fiefed master.
Thou hast known this. Then witness for me,
Heaven,
If it were less than human art could prove,
And pardon me as I did combat it.

ARSENIO.

'T was not enough to keep thy wanton feats
Within the pale and vortex of a court,
But thy foul breath—

OLIVIA.

Oh hear, Almighty Power!
This is Arsenio speaks!

ARSENIO.

Will none, will none
Drag hence that frantic woman?

OLIVIA.

Prove between us
Whose pulse doth beat more temperate. A woman
May well be heard who comes t' accuse herself.
It is not perjury that swears our shame;
'T is conscience. He who long hath tempted me;

Who craftily did warp me from my duty;
Who hunted every winding of my love
That fled from him; who seized it harass'd, breathless;
The traitor, the seducer, is Arsenio!—
Nay, start not, sirs—Heaven help me as 't is so.

ARSENIO.

Demons of falsehood! Can you not be true
To your own shame? Rather than hold your silence,
You 'd blast your own repute: nay, you would sin,
Were 't but to talk and talk on 't.

OCTAVIO.

How is this?
My friend....

ARSENIO.

Thy friend!

OCTAVIO.

Wilt thou not prove it false?

ARSENIO.

Leave me.

OCTAVIO.

Can this be true?

ARSENIO.

Uxorious dotard!
Aye, trust the very lies that make them falser
Than e'er was dreamt of. This is monstrous vanity!
You do not swear more stoutly you are virtuous,
Than, when you've owned the deed, you boast of it.
Alike to be believed; true but to this,
To your own lies and vainness.—If you doubt me,
I shall be found, sir. At the western monument
I'll wait for you till eve.

JULIA.

Oh do not leave me!

ARSENIO.

Do not attempt to stay me!—Then even so;
[*pushes her from him.*
And all the ills I feel be doubled on thee. [*Exit.*

OCTAVIO.

She falls!

JULIA.

Oh I am sick at heart!

OLIVIA.

Come, cheerly.

JULIA.

Would that this hour had been my last! I grieve
I am thus weak. 'T is a strange part I play,
And strangely do I mar it in the playing.

OLIVIA.

Fie, no more heart! 'T is but one note let down
That jars amid sweet sounds. Come, follow me.
We've yet much gain to do ere night be past;
We've yet the heaviest hour, as 't is the last.

## SCENE II.—*The Street before the Duke's Palace.*

*Enter* PIETRO *and* JACINTHA.

PIETRO.

By day and night, wife, but this confounds me. That Olivia should be false, is what in some kind I look for; but that she should be false to her falseness! What can this mean?

JACINTHA.

It means more mischief, to be sure. But they 're not alone in Mantua at these deeds. Signor Claudio, too, has found out his wife at what something smacks of it; and is, in course of it, gone mad.

PIETRO.

Well, that a wise man should part with his senses because a foolish woman gets rid of her honesty! Why, in which of his limbs doth he smart for it? Is his doublet the worse fashioned? or do his hose hang the more ill-favouredly upon his leg? His flesh healeth as soon as the flesh of him who is unyoked; his broth is made of the same viands; and his breath can cool it as other men's. Then why should he send his reason after a jade's honesty who hath done nothing toward it? No, no; let her that acts the folly be the fool. Aye, but there 's a soreness in it that covers a man all over like a boil: it peels off the cuticle of his comforts, and leaves him bare, that every touch is a gadfly to him. There 's nothing so tender as the skin of your cuckold. What can heal him? Revenge?

his neighbour's soreness cannot mend his.—Valour? 't is a vile enemy to a raw skin.—Patience? why, it hath an oil in it: but your true remedy is faith, which sees all and believes nought.

JACINTHA.

Out, coxcomb! Here's a profession for a man just married, as thou art.

PIETRO.

'T is even so, wife; and heaven give me faith when I need it.—But, who have we here?

*Enter* PEREGRINO *and* SOLARIO.

SOLARIO.

This cannot be; I cannot leave you yet. My conscience tells me not to hold, while you've a single sense left. Oh, sweet virtue, that bids us do our likings!

PEREGRINO.

You'll be drunk; and then our masters will come, and ask us why we are so; as if 't were any fault of ours the wine should get into our heads. Let one of us, at the least, be sober, to

answer our masters. Our masters! we shall soon have no masters.

SOLARIO.

And why so?

PEREGRINO.

We shall soon be as drunk as kings, and a king hath no master: and that's why your idle varlets, for the most part, go without masters. But now let's home, and mind our affairs. Which way be yours?

PIETRO.

What blasphemy is in these drunken rogues! Now could I, by the virtue of my office, apprehend the knaves for misdemeanour. But it becometh him who is newly yoked to be peaceful. Wiving and thriving make men prudent.

SOLARIO.

Why, as I bethink me, my affairs must be this way.

PEREGRINO.

Then mine must be this way, for they did lie in the opposite to yours.—What a brave companion have I here *(to his bottle)*. There's none for the road like this. Brimfull of sweet dis-

courses, that make me every thing I would be, and when I would. It is my choler and my gentleness, my life and death, my strength and weakness, my getting up and my lying down—a compendium of the whole man in his fulness; and draws the humours out of him, as Sol makes the grass green. Oh, rare Phœbus! I've travelled—

*Enter* ARSENIO.

SOLARIO.

My lord, my lord, a word with you. Look at yonder sot. How do the staggers sit upon him, eh?

ARSENIO.

What fellow is this? Away, I know thee not—

PEREGRINO.

Not know us! I see how 'tis. He has been at it too.

ARSENIO.

I knew you once.

PEREGRINO.

And will again, when you've deposited those fumes upon your pillow.—But, my lord, you bid us ask to be replenished. Replenish, my lord, replenish.

ARSENIO.

Begone, you lazy knaves; hence, I say: I knew you once, but then I had ceased to know myself. Oh, now I am new found; and all that once was mine, all that my devilish passion had devoured, becomes again mine own. Oh, that a man should need misfortune to awaken him, and that he cannot always be just while he is happy! Hence, idle sots, and be sober.—Sirrah, follow me (*to* SOLARIO).

[*Exeunt* ARSENIO *and* SOLARIO.

PEREGRINO.

What, does he rage because I have done his bidding? Good, now; excellent! Let him bid me be sober, that's all. Let him order me to abstinence. So will I say to him: My lord, your lordship once commanded me to do that which was pleasing and wholesome; and I

obeyed to the very perfection of exquisite obedience. But what said you to it? You flouted, and you scoffed, and you spoke churlishly; thereby choaking up the seeds of duty and reverence, and teaching your true servant to become an arrant knave. And shall I now obey? Shall I give up sweet liquor for a huff? Shall I be thirsty for a frown, and forego the fair commerce of the bottle to be called sot? Go to: your lordship thinks not of it—Go to—

*Enter* OCTAVIO.

OCTAVIO.

So, sirrah, thou art found at last. Where hast thou been all this while, that thou hast so neglected thy duty, and—

PEREGRINO.

—My lord,—for, as I now bethink me, you are my true and loyal master,—if there 's a man in Mantua that will shew half as much study in performing your biddings, may I never have the face to ask for a replenish. And that I am thus, is by your bidding.

OCTAVIO.

By my bidding!

PEREGRINO.

I'll demonstrate: for though you have a little too much jumbled my brains, yet your lordship being, heaven defend us, sober, may know these things as well as any drunken man in Mantua. Did not your honour bid me find the Lord Arsenio, and do his orders?

OCTAVIO.

Well, fellow!

PEREGRINO.

And good fellow; for I did so. Therefore, I am drunk by your orders.—

OCTAVIO.

Did Arsenio bid thee to be drunk?

PEREGRINO.

Here's a purse. That it was his, is a proof of his bidding: that it is empty, is a proof of my doing.

OCTAVIO.

Then do I see his villany clear, and all to the same end.

PEREGRINO.

So did I, my lord, long since. I smelt

something wrong, and was about to cry "faugh." But 't was no business of mine; so I stopped my nose, and drank.

OCTAVIO.

Pietro, look to this varlet.—I must go weep. Julia is dead! and the law is about to take acquaintance of the manner of her death. Already is warrant issued to apprehend Arsenio.—There is rumour, too, of another murder, that which Claudio is said to have committed upon his lady! The senate is about to assemble. Meantime, secure this knave. Do it, good Pietro; and be watchful.— [*Exit* OCTAVIO.

PIETRO.

Here's a to do in Mantua! The Lord Arsenio accused of murder before the senate! What an age do I live in! But come, knave, thou and I must talk.—Follow me.

PEREGRINO.

Then you must be content to walk a little zig-zag; for I am a mortal enemy to straight lines.

PIETRO.

The way is short—

PEREGRINO.

—But somewhat wide—

PIETRO.

—To the Duke's palace.

PEREGRINO.

What, I enter the Duke's palace! Oh fie, I am not worthy. But I hear, by the way, that thou art married. Give me thy hand, husband: shall I tell thee thy fate? Here 't is:—As full of horn as an ass's hoof; and here, here 's a line shall make a man of thee; but such a man, my little Cerberus, my Janus, my Janitor! Thou'lt need two foreheads, one cannot contain all that will be put upon it. Thou hast watched doors, but never watched a woman.—Farewell!

PIETRO.

In the Duke's name, fellow, I bid thee stand!

PEREGRINO.

And if the Duke's name can make me stand, the Duke's name must be stronger than the Duke's wine.—See'st thou the Duke's Head yonder? how he shakes in the wind, and looks as rosy as if he had been coloured by his own

wine. There's my duke, I owe my duty there; and if t'other Duke want me, let him seek me there. Two hundred heads, and four hundred pair of eyes, were not enough: and so, farewell. [*Exit.*

PIETRO.

A puzzling knave! It may be so.—Yet who is so fit to escape it as myself, in the prime of youth and flower of beauty; a man loaded with concerns, who bear a weighty part in the state, and am consulted by all, from the Duke who governs, down to his daughter, who, to say the truth, is but a scurvy kind of a damsel. And shall I fear? shall I tremble, because an ill-mannered varlet jeers at me? Yet I know not. He spoke of fate. No merit is proof against fate; and if 't is decreed—Well, let all those who fear the destinies wrap themselves up betimes in faith, and do as your mole doth.

[*Exit.*

*Enter* ANTONIO, *in the habit of a friar.*

ANTONIO.

All things do hang upon the seasoned will

Of Him who made them; and this pendant
world,
Like to a little globe or atomy,
Which wily boys have pois'd upon a thread,
Moves at his bidding; while we sightless things,
Each thinking that his mighty weight can turn
The ponderous earth, are not so much as dreamt
of
By millions of our fellows. I am dead
Now to the world, save only to Amanda.
Yet knows she not of me.—Can that be weak-
ness
Which thus can steel the noblest part of man,
And bid me put this subtle armour on
Against what must not be? It is my strength,
My refuge, my great hold. Oh, strong in-
firmity!
Brave apprehension! noble frailty! raising
The young conceptions of our faculties
Beyond their natural and destin'd birth.
No soul once stirred by love's strong puissance,
Did e'er subside into itself again:
But every grain of good or ill within us,

Swoln to a mightier measure, henceforth dwells
Contin'ally afloat.——Brother, how now?

*Enter a Friar.*

ANTONIO.

Have you disposed all things as I bid you, when we parted?

FRIAR.

All is done according to thy bidding, and will be found in readiness.

ANTONIO.

Then take these letters; they are for Claudio. This first will inform him of Amanda's rumoured death; nor will he need much to confirm him in the belief of it, if not already fortified therein. It is known and trusted in the city, that she hath ta'en a wound at his hand; which, though slight at its beginning, I have so heeded to magnify in my report of it, that if the fame of it reach his ears, as 't is most certain so to do, it may well be received in his mind as the sufficient cause of her death.

FRIAR.

I have myself been busy in noising it abroad.

ANTONIO.

Then this will bear more likelihood. Here is a second letter, which contains the assurance of Amanda's innocence, shewn on the firmest basis, signed by my hand, witnessed by my most sacred vows to Heaven, and indeed supported by such proof as cannot fail to convince him. The moment of his receiving this is the most to be dreaded of any that can befal him; therefore be near him when he learns what it is big with.

FRIAR.

Moreover, it is reported that the senate is even now about to convene, and sit in judgment on the Lord Arsenio, for the murder of his wife.

ANTONIO.

I have heard of this; while some affirm that Julia is not dead, but that his treatment of her hath moved her friends to break their union.

FRIAR.

I spoke with one but now, who gave much reason and circumstance for maintaining that she is still living.

ANTONIO.

Can you help me to some speedy conversation with that person?

FRIAR.

If you will use your diligence, we may soon o'ertake him.

ANTONIO.

Then lead me to him straight. The business of our present hour will be matter for the lives of many. [*Exeunt.*

# ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Duke and Council assembled.* OCTAVIO, ETHELBERT, *and others.* ARSENIO, *as prisoner, in chains.*

DUKE.

My lords, the purpose of our sudden meeting
Hath drawn its due of sorrow from us all;
And, could our tears wash out the cause of it,
Our griefs had done it well.—A noble lord,
Arraign'd of murder, waits upon your sentence.
Our country's charter names you for his judges,
And the accused accepts you.—Please your graces,
We do proceed in judgment?

FIRST LORD.

We do stand
Prepar'd to hear; and to condemn or free,
As truth shall seem to us.

DUKE.

My lord Arsenio,
You know the cause which thus arresteth you.
What can you answer?

ARSENIO.

That I am a man,
Therein more guilty where I've no accuser,
Than where I stand arraigned. Of Julia's death
I am most guiltless, as 't is here set down;
For never sword or weapon from this arm
Was pointed at her breast. But, oh, she fell
By the untimely blast and corrupt breath
Of murderous words!—To what your graces doom me,
I yield myself; but do not stain my honour,
That I did stab a weak and innocent woman.

DUKE.

And this the fouler murder. Kills he less
Who angles with a hair, than he who levels
His leaden bullets from a culverin?
A spider's web enmeshes her weak prey;
And he who wars against an equal foe
Stakes boldly half his life. But here's a crime
Impugns alike your valour as your virtue,

And leaves you fameless.—Have you further
answer?

ARSENIO.

I would die nobly in my country's cause,
Not give my blood to gild a ruffian axe.

DUKE.

Her cause were weak, if she did need the arm
That 's signal 'gainst a woman.

ARSENIO.

Justice, lords,
Demands my death. Since there's no way but
this,
Let it be prompt.

DUKE *(to the council).*

Will you have further proof,
Or are you satisfied?

LORDS.

We're satisfied.

*Enter* CLAUDIO *(rushing in).*

CLAUDIO.

Your sentence, righteous peers, against a wretch,
A murderer, and a villain!

DUKE.

Who is this,
That with a tremulous and fearful tongue
Comes here to cross our purpose?

CLAUDIO.

I am he,
The thing that once was Claudio.

DUKE.

In good time
You come to answer; for we had sent forth
To bid you to our presence.

CLAUDIO.

Then pronounce—
Pronounce!—I stand for death—I 'm guilty!

DUKE.

Hold!
A peerless lady had you ta'en to wife:
Report and circumstance do speak her murdered,
And point direct at you. To prove them false,
Let her appear and free you.—Can you answer?

CLAUDIO *(aside).*

I cannot speak.

DUKE.

What, nothing? how is this?

CLAUDIO.

My lord, I cannot.

DUKE.

Nay, the time be yours.

CLAUDIO.

Oh, I have lost—Ha, what a word was that!
Lost! said I lost!—Oh no, I stabb'd, I murder'd
Heaven's image here on earth; which wanted nought
But immortality of heaven itself.
And—give me leave a while—I faint—

DUKE.

Give help!—

CLAUDIO.

Shame strikes me to the earth; but greater guilt
Doth throw down shame, and call me back again
To tell my crime.—I had a treasure once!
See here these features—Oh, they kill my sight!
Well, what mine eyes devoured were dregs and trash

To what my soul did feast on. Had you known
her,
You would have known how worthless words
to paint her.
This was mine own, till I did throw it from me,
And kill the world's perfection.—

DUKE.

Is this real?
Do you confess all this?

CLAUDIO.

All this, and more.
I had a friend too! Such a matchless pair
Did never dwell together in one breast.
But will you hear how I did frame my woes,
And grow in wretchedness?

DUKE.

Say it all freely.

CLAUDIO.

My love was of that kind, that, as each hour
Doubled my last hour's knowledge of her worth,
It grew to frenzy; and I thought the air
That gently clasped her form too bold, pre-
sumptuous,
And man not worth to look on her. Alas!

What she did think on, that my thought did
envy;
Where she did stay her precious eyes a while,
My sight grew jealous of. At length, oh shame!
When this wide world no living cause could shew,
I raked the ashes of the sepulchre,
And set dead Angelo's departed spirit
Betwixt my heaven and me. Living, he loved
her—
I beg for pause again....

DUKE.

Strong passion shakes him.
This is the very quintessence of love,
Which finer natures are most pregnant in;
But the dull herd and rabble of mankind
Will call it ecstacy.

CLAUDIO.

...And there began
The madness that undid me, jealousy.
I sought for more probation of her love
Than words could give; set on my friend to
prove her;
And when she was most chase, most tried, most
true,

I thought her faithless;—wounded, cursed, and
killed her.

DUKE.

This is a cause to make stern Justice weep,
And pity as she strikes.

CLAUDIO.

Oh, take my life,
For something more than justice calls for it.
But wash her white with this. Here, read this
paper.
Build her a tomb of alabaster pure,
Where Innocence sits smiling through her tears,
Looking from earth to an immortal crown,
Which angels bear; and let good spirits bow;
While I lie dead in sackcloth at her feet.

DUKE *(reads)*.

"This from thy once loved friend Antonio,
"who has bid farewell to the world and thee.
"As sacred as my eternal hope is what I now
"write. I was true to thy bidding. Amanda
"is innocent of thy suspicions, and the purest
"of beings: thou art abused by madness.
"Should she yet live, trust her, and be happy."
Now, by my office, 't is most pitiful;

And wrests anew fresh sorrow from my eyes,
That bids me hold.

OCTAVIO.

Oh that the law would feel
What oft doth move its stern interpreters,
To judge between them! This were equity;
And like offence should have like forfeitures.
But, with its changeless tongue, it oft must speak
One sentence with two judgments.

DUKE.

By my life,
I grieve not less to doom them both together,
Than that they both must die. My lords, your counsel.

FIRST LORD.

The law doth bind us.

SECOND LORD.

Can we change the law?
We 're here but to apply it.

DUKE.

Use your mercies.

FIRST LORD.

The law forbids it. All we can is pity.

DUKE.

Then, is your sentence death?

FIRST, SECOND, &c. LORDS.

Death—Death—Death—Death.

DUKE.

Then Heaven bestow its equity on both!

*Enter an* OFFICER.

OFFICER.

A holy father claims to be admitted,
On matter which imports the present meeting.

DUKE.

Know you from whom he comes?

OFFICER.

He says his business
Will shew his coming clear and prosperous.

DUKE.

Bid him approach.—And if he bring relief
To any here aggrieved, he is most welcome.

*Enter* ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

Vouchsafe your noble graces give me hearing
For a poor word or two.

DUKE.

For a whole volume,
Clad in such holy binding.

ANTONIO.

By my order
I 'm bound to silence; yet, for the world's good,
I 've sometimes leave to speak. You have two prisoners
Arraigned for murder, nobles of this land.—

DUKE.

They stand before you.

ANTONIO.

It doth often chance,
When over-cautious care hath forecast edicts
Which the state rarely wields, some rust doth grow
Upon the antique armour of the law,
That 's purposed to defend it; thereby eating
The even, sweet, and wholesome perfectness,
That most doth honour law. Even so is this,
Which ages have left mould'ring; that 't is feared,
If you do stir it, it may crush to pieces,
And some of them be lost.

DUKE.

He speaks like one
Whose knowledge may bring comfort. In good season,
Say what you know of this.

ANTONIO.

Our holy convent,
Famed for its pious uses and austerity,
Hath drawn together many a convertite,
From the wild uses of this varied world;
Captains, who count their beads as once their soldiers;
Some learned in th' unsteady lore of health;
Some in the maze of law. One among these,
Deserving well for piety and skill,
Hearing of this procedure, hath drawn out,
From the neglected treasures of his study,
What now may do us help. Here is a clause;
Age and desuetude had piled it o'er
With dust oblivious, till his subtle touch
Hath brushed it clean again. Please you to hear it.—

*(Reads.)* "But, to save the ignominious spill-
"ing of noble blood, if that the condemned

" be noble, he may receive grace, should any
" Mantuan maid or widow offer herself to be
" joined to him in wedlock, provided that no
" previous knowledge or concert did exist be-
" tween the parties."

DUKE *(having looked).*

'T is written so. Thou art a holy man,
And not less learned. Claudio, stand thou free.
We 'll have 't proclaimed in Mantua. By my life,
Had I another daughter, none but she
Should bring the mercy which the law affords.

CLAUDIO.

If you would bring me mercy, give me death;
Which I 'd not beg, but that a mightier law
Forbids me to bestow it on myself.

ANTONIO.

Since that the time did teach me to be prompt,
And that my holy office and my brethren
Do give me frequent means within the city,
To know all consciences, I have discovered
A maiden well deserving. If your leaves
Will grant it so, she shall become the means
Of rescue to this lord. Yet there 's one boon
I humbly beg your graces.

DUKE.

Say its tenor.

ANTONIO.

Here is another lord; and, though my judgment
Could choose betwixt them in a single case,
As they were joined in sentence, let them be
United still in mercy. Please your graces
It shall so stand. Before the deed be ended,
I will into your hands commit such proof
Of me and my intents, as shall acquit me,
And place me worthily in your esteem.

DUKE.

You seem not less; in the which trust and hope
We do depute to you our sovereign word,
So to be used for mercy as 't is meet.
Ourself will hear all after. Speed you well.—
My lords, our present purposes are satisfied,
And for the while we part.—Here break we up.

[*Exeunt Council.*

*Manent* ARSENIO, CLAUDIO, ANTONIO, OCTAVIO, ETHELBERT, PIETRO.

PIETRO.

What poor-looking knaves are they who stand

between a ring and a halter! One way or other, sure to be tied up; and on either side a priest.—

ANTONIO.

And first to Claudio.—Lead this lord away,
That we may question freely.— [*Exeunt* OCTAVIO, ETHELBERT, PIETRO *leading away* ARSENIO.]— Will you swear
That what the mercy of the law doth grant,
You 'll wear it thankful, merciful, and true?

CLAUDIO.

There is no mercy in the law that bids
Me live. I thank thee, father, for my soul;
But, for my life, I ask thy leave to die.

ANTONIO.

Why what is this? Thou fear'st to kill thyself,
Yet fear'st not to arrest the tender hand
That would thy death arrest. Thy conscience cries,
'Strike not the dagger to thy mortal heart!'
Yet wilt thou smite thy heart against its point
Which lies but in thy path. And what art thou,—
At once thine own deceiver and thy dupe,

The vane that varies, and the blast that shifts
it,—
That, of God's presence in thy breast, dost make
A shroud for every sin, a common cloak,
And which the wind of all occasions blows
To cover where thou akest? What was thy day,
Thou makest night; and thou dost grope to lose
That which thy hand hath grasped. What was
thy reason,
Thou makest madness; for thou dost maintain
A fever in thy blood, while health remains,
That undoes health. But when the fever comes
That ends the cheat, thou 'lt tremble to behold
Thou wert so long a dreamer; and must end,
With one short sigh, the vast account with
Heaven
Which thy whole life hath kept.—Fond, fool-
ish man,
To practise with the incorruptible!

CLAUDIO.

I yield me, and with wonder, that my mind
So long framed its own darkness.

ANTONIO.

Follow me.
Thou think'st it wretchedness. Short-sighted man,
That cannot see thy bliss where it doth lie.

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Duke's Palace.*

*Enter* OLIVIA, OCTAVIO, ETHELBERT, GRATIANO, *and* ARSENIO.

ARSENIO.

The wrongs I've done thee are too ponderous
For mortal strength to bear.

GRATIANO.

I can but dream
Such things once were; unreal now, and past.
I had a sister once——Still I've a coûsin,
As fair as was dead Julia; featur'd like her;
Her voice accented so, her form so furnish'd.
Her breast is like the lily, ere the wind
Hath kissed it with a male. Her name's not Julia;

But she shall be new gossipp'd for that name,
New born unto thy love, and shall be Julia.
She sings, moves, dances, with such equal grace,
As do dead Julia rival. Call her Julia,
And she shall sit as fully in thy love
As she who was there.

ARSENIO.

No, it cannot be;
For, since the first that made a lover sigh,
There was not one to rival with my Julia.
Did she not bless me dying?

OLIVIA.

Even so.

ARSENIO.

Inhuman murderer!—But no; 't was justice.
Say she was false; oh, say it!

OLIVIA.

Was she not?
Did she not own it? She was false as I am.

ARSENIO.

And there's another voice that cries to me!
Oh what a tyrant doth Temptation play,
Binding our conscience in dull slavery,
Till that a huge and overweening crash

Doth set it free. Then comes each petty vice,
And clamours in the throng.

OLIVIA.

Thou art deceived.
I say it; I, who never knew deceit
But once; and then deceit was virtue.

ARSENIO.

Ha!

OLIVIA.

True, she was false as I am. But now mark—
Ask of Octavio, ask it of this lord,
Where stood Olivia in the very hour
Thou thought'st her most profane.

ARSENIO.

Say on! say on!

OCTAVIO.

She stood not near thee. No; 't was Julia,
Julia;
And holiest rites have sanctified the deed.
'T was Julia,

ARSENIO.

Merciful high powers!

OCTAVIO.

'T was she.
Aye, on my soul. A maiden bride was she?
No, that she could not swear. But, on my life,
The dew that on the rose-leaf hangs is guiltless
As she, of all but thee.

ARSENIO.

Oh!

OLIVIA.

Aye, do groan on.
Thou, a false friend, thou murderer, and thou perjur'd!
There's not a sacrilege to love or friendship,
That has been told to fright too credent maids,
But it is true of thee. Lie there, and weep.

*Enter* ANTONIO *and* CLAUDIO.

ANTONIO.

How fares it, lady, with your penitent?
Comes he prepared as fitting?

OLIVIA.

We do stand
Upon your pious bidding, holy father.

ANTONIO.

Let all approach.

*Enter* JULIA *and* AMANDA *veiled.*

CLAUDIO *(aside).*

Look not upon me now,
Blest spirit of my murder'd love; for this,
This, worse than all the rest, will sink me deeper.

ANTONIO *(presenting* JULIA *to* CLAUDIO*).*

Claudio, attend. In lieu of her you murder'd,
Swear you to take this maiden to your wife;
To know none else; to love and cherish her,
And be her true protector and her lord.

CLAUDIO *(taking* JULIA *by the hand).*

I swear.

ANTONIO *(presenting* AMANDA *to* ARSENIO*).*

Arsenio, take this maiden. Swear—

ARSENIO.

I swear.

ANTONIO.

And further, in your memories
Be 't ever present what you owe to them;
And hold your lives as tenures at their hands.

ARSENIO *and* CLAUDIO.

We swear.

ANTONIO (*to* JULIA).

And you do vow unto this lord,
To be a faithful and true loving wife.

JULIA.

To every duty which my youth hath treasured;
To all your holy precepts have enforced;
With what my heart, affections, love, shall teach;
I vow to be most true.

ARSENIO.

What sounds are these?
It is the voice—Oh, lady, speak again!
For my enthralled senses catch th' alarm,
Making the very subtilty of madness
Seem sober reason to me!

ANTONIO.

What is this?

ARSENIO.

I tell thee, holy father, that these words—
But no; it cannot be.

ANTONIO (*to* JULIA).

This do you swear?

JULIA.

So mercy be my hope!

ARSENIO.

It is, it is!

No other sounds could reach thus to my heart!
It is the voice of Julia!

ANTONIO.

What art thou,
That with profane and boisterous breath invad'st—

ARSENIO.

If it be not, then I am mad indeed.

ANTONIO.

His sorrows have unmanned him.

ARSENIO.

But one look!

ANTONIO.

'T will make thee still more frensied; for such wildness
Warps reason to its uses. Yet behold;
Let this appease thee that no Julia's here.

[*Unveils her.*

ARSENIO.

This is some devilish priestcraft; or the air
Acts such fantastic gambols to my eyes,
As 'thralled my ears.

ANTONIO.

This is but ecstasy.

ARSENIO.

I tell thee, priest, forbear, or it will make me mad indeed. Wouldst thou persuade me that I do not know myself—the organs I live by—the affections that sway me? that I do not feel, hear, see, by my own senses? or that Nature could thus twice excel herself, and form two Julias?

ETHELBERT.

Now will he rave to have back that, which, but one hour since, he would not look on.

ARSENIO.

Claudio, she is mine. Dare not to use a husband's right, to taste her lips, to touch the extremest verge of her garment; to look, to think upon her with a thought of love: for if thou dost—

ANTONIO (*to* CLAUDIO).

If there be law in Mantua, lead her hence.

ARSENIO.

Dare not to move. No, you shall yield her up before you budge hence: no running into corners. Gratiano, help me to save thy sister from the spoiler's grasp.

GRATIANO.

I dare not call her sister; for I've heard,
That Nature sometimes, in a sportive mood,
—Therein most lavish where she seems most thrifty,—
Doth take her own perfections for her mould
To cast them o'er again.

ETHELBERT.

There is but one way. Let Claudio depart with her; and when this mad Signor hath recovered his senses—

ARSENIO.

No, not an hour.—An hour! no, not as long as could divide into a thousand parts, the thousandth part of the swiftest wish that ever bridegroom formed. I know the lusty Signors well

enough, and what a sweet temptation is in her eye.—Despair and furies!—This too when, after all my doubts, my fears, my sad perplexities, I've found her true!—

PIETRO.

He's mad.—'T were as well your worships let me call in some stout companions here without to hold this lord, for it seemeth he hath no great stomach to these proceedings.

ETHELBERT.

Do so, good Pietro, and with speed.

(PIETRO *goes out, and returns with some Servants of the* DUKE'*s, who seize* ARSENIO.)

ARSENIO.

As well before my face at once.—Have I no weapon?

OLIVIA (*unveiling* AMANDA).

Then let me speak; for here's another witness,
More potent than the first.

CLAUDIO (*looking at* AMANDA).

No, 't is no vision.
My heart has been entranced with gazing on her,

And long hath owned her mine. My blest
Amanda!

ARSENIO (*to* JULIA).

And this is real too; no mockery,
But living, and beloved.

JULIA.

'T is the same Julia
Whom thy unkindness killed; but, with thy
love,
She has revived again.

CLAUDIO (*to* AMANDA).

Canst thou forgive me?

AMANDA.

'T is light to pardon where the crime is love;
Though thine were somewhat heavy.

CLAUDIO.

Heavy hour!
I will remember it, though thou do not.—
'T was a rude test of love, that makes it surer.

ANTONIO.

Think you 't is better thus?

CLAUDIO.

'T is bliss unspeakable.

Yet I've one wish unfilled.—I had a friend...

(ANTONIO *discovers himself*).

Ha! my Antonio too, my second self!

ANTONIO.

Come to my heart.—

CLAUDIO.

What hand omnipotent
Hath wrought these wonders?

ANTONIO.

'T was a mortal hand;
As you shall judge when we recount them o'er.

OLIVIA (*to* ETHELBERT).

You, sir, were half-convinced before, that your knowledge of our sex was somewhat strained from the truth; what say you now?

ETHELBERT.

That could I meet with one more like to any of these present, and were she of my mind and your complexion, I too might get wived.

CLAUDIO (*to* ANTONIO).

Thou art the guardian genius of our fate,
That saved us all; and we again will stem
Life's ebbs and floods together.

ANTONIO.

Never I.

My day is run through; and this holy habit
Binds me till death.—Nay, do not answer me.—
'T is not the bent of a diseased hour,
The times' corruption, nor the world's distaste,
Nor aught of matter thou hast put on me,
As thou perchance might think it, that have wrought
To bid me from the world. 'T is a fixt vow,
Upon a firm, fixt purpose. Fare thee well:
We 'll yet be happy in our several states;
You in the peopled commerce of mankind,
I in my pious service and devotion:
And study, by a well-deserved trust,
To deserve love.—Be patient, and be just.

# HENRY THE SEVENTH.

*AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY.*

# CHARACTERS.

## MEN.

Earl of RICHMOND, King of England, under the title of Henry the Seventh.

JAMES the Fourth, King of Scotland.

PERKIN WARBECK, supposed son of Edward the Fourth, Duke of York, and heir to the crown.

PHILIP, Archduke of Austria, afterwards King of Castile; now a youth under the tuition of Margaret.

Earl of WARWICK, son to the late Duke of Clarence, and the male representative of the House of York.

Lord STANLEY, afterwards Earl of Derby, married to King Henry's mother.

Lord WILLIAM STANLEY, his brother.

Earls of OXFORD and SURREY.

MORTON, Bishop of Ely, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

FOX, Bishop of Exeter, afterwards of Winchester.

Sir ROBERT CLIFFORD, Sir ROBERT WILLOUGHBY, SIR REGINALD BRAY, Sir RICHARD GUILFORD, Sir RICHARD EDGECOMBE, &c.

} Adherents to Richmond's party.

Lord FITZWALTER, Sir THOMAS BROUGHTON, Yorkists.

CATESBY, an adherent to Richard the Third.

Lords CONGRESHALL and STAFFORD, Sir GEORGE NEVIL, Sir JOHN TAYLOR, partisans of Warbeck.

Don PEDRO de AYALA, Spanish ambassador.

Sir JOHN DIGBY, lieutenant of the Tower.—A Jailor, and Keepers of the Tower.

## WOMEN.

ELIZABETH, widow of Edward the Fourth.

ELIZABETH, their daughter.

Lady CATHARINE GORDON, cousin to King James, and married to Warbeck.

MARGARET, Duchess of Burgundy, and sister to King Edward.

Lady BRAMPTON, her attendant.

*Officers, Guards, Soldiers, Messengers, Attendants, &c.*

*The scene is in England; on the borders of Scotland; and in the Netherlands.*

# HENRY THE SEVENTH.

## ACT I.

SCENE I. — LEICESTER. — *A Room of State.*
*King* HENRY *and his Court, &c.*

HENRY.

Now, joy to England, and fair days of peace!
And to th' immortal hand that fought for us,
Praise infinite!

*All.*

Long live the Earl of Richmond,
Henry the Seventh of England!

HENRY.

Gallant friends,
You share my heart among you. Thirty years
Hath civil fury fed the dogs of war
On the fair bosom of this bleeding isle,
And faction rankled in her daily wounds.
Now is her hour of penitence gone by;

And may th' avenging wrath of Heaven appeased
Spread healing compost on her scars!—

*Enter Lord* STANLEY *and Lord* W. STANLEY.

HENRY.

Lord Stanley,
Now more than ever called our father! Conquest
Brings no such dear advantage to our arms,
As our best cousin George, thy loving son,
Restored from Gloster's fury to thy love.

LORD STANLEY.

How I am bounden to your Highness' cause,
Let that speak for me.

HENRY.

Oh, we owe thee more
Than words can pay.—Nor to Lord William Stanley
Is our debt less.—Accept our general thanks,
Till we have satisfied the craving hour,
That's greedy of our thoughts.——How now, what tidings?

*Enter an Officer.*

OFFICER.

The tyrant's body, found among the slain,

Hath, after many vile indignities,
Been brought to Leicester.

HENRY.

Give it holy burial,
And decent rites. For the immortal part,
Let the immortal Judge who made it so,
Absolve or smite it. — And, my loving lords,
Since that my deeds can better speak than words
The good I owe you, know 't is our intent
To progress on to London, there to hail
This happy dawning of a prosp'rous day,
With full completion of our promise giv'n.
The fair Elizabeth, whose op'ning bud
Gloster so rudely crushed, we will invite
To share our throne and love. And this the rather,
For that 't was rumoured by our enemies
Our hand was plighted in a foreign faith.
No foreign shoots shall spring among our race;
But we will plant a stock of British growth,
Whose roots shall be unshaken.

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

From this stock,

Where York and Lancaster shall grow together,
May branches spread to shelter all the isle!

HENRY.

Where York and Lancaster!

LORD W. STANLEY.

Your highness' wisdom,
And love toward the state, do nobly vie
Which shall be foremost in our praise and thanks;
And palsied be the hand would wield a sword
Against two kingly houses so united,
To end their ancient broils, and prop each other.

HENRY.

Prop Lancaster with York!.... Sir Robert Willoughby,
You shall to Sheriff-hutton.... You..... The darkness
Of the uncertain times commands us speed.
The Princess waits thee there. Be sure thou give her
Safe conduct, prompt.—And be assured, my lords,
How I proceed in honour of my sceptre
Hath well been poised and weighed by meditation,

And a right-forward zeal to wear it firmly.
*(Aside)*—It might be by the sword..... That's
somewhat harsh;
And 't were a slipp'ry title to their love.
Or I might call that distaff sceptre cozened,
By wanton dalliance, from a woman's grasp;
And rule the realm as I might rule her heart.
Then Lancaster indeed were propped by York.—
No, no; this must not be.———Is not this
Monday?

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

It is, my liege.

HENRY.

Then 't was on Saturday
That Bosworth Field was fought?

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

Even so, dread sir.
It was a bloody and a glorious day.

HENRY.

And I will ever keep 't a holy one;
Not leaden Saturn's, but a golden day.
We will so order hence our journey's march,
That self-same Saturn shall behold our entry

Into our golden capital.—Lord Stanley,
What point of London do we first approach?

LORD STANLEY.

To Shoreditch, good my liege.

HENRY.

I'll have a litter,
Wherein the prying of the multitude
Cannot invade. And let there watch be placed,
Whereby the curious throng cannot impede us.
No shouts of triumph shall attend our coming;
But silent and unseen I will arrive.
Now onward in our march. No flourish trumpets.—
Sir Robert, come with me. We must converse.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Prison in Leicester.* CATESBY *discovered.*

CATESBY.

Oh, madness of this world! Gone but three days,
I held in this same dungeon Stanley's son,

And I'm his pris'ner now. This surly keeper,
As brutal as his trade, now scowls at me,
Who crouch'd beneath my hand.—The caitiff
comes.

*Enter Jailor.*

CATESBY.

His looks are not the same: they're those of surly sorrow. He will not speak... How now, fellow?

JAILOR.

Aye, Catesby, I am thy fellow now. It had been better for us both I had become thy fellow while thou wert great, than as thou art now. I am fallen as well as thou. I, who commanded here yesterday, am a slave here to-day. My reign is past, as Richard's is. I am deposed from my office, and another governs in my stead; that's all.

CATESBY.

Thy harsh looks, thy flinty soul, and cruel deeds, have won thee this reverse.

JAILOR.

My harsh looks and cruel deeds! Hear you how he rails now! Were my looks harsh when,

they scowled at Stanley? Were my deeds cruel, when thou commandedst them? Thou usedst then to call it duty; and the less I had of man in me, to feel for man, the more I deserved of thee. What have I done since, but practise upon thee, for two days, the lessons that, for two years, thou taughtest me toward others? Accuse thy fortune, that brought thee in my way; not me, that do to thee but what I did to all, and by thy bidding too.

CATESBY.

Unfeeling wretch! how canst thou hope for mercy, who never shewed any?

JAILOR.

I expect no mercy; I want none. Let the worst come. I've made a long acquaintance with sufferings; and, by slighting the sorrows of others, have lost all feeling of my own. Happy or miserable, content or wretched, I've seen all end, and 't is but the dream of a moment.

*Enter an Officer.*

OFFICER.

I come th' unwelcome messenger of news

That must be told, however it be grating.
Read here this paper.

CATESBY.

Death! no word but death!
I did expect not less. 'T is somewhat hard
To meet it thus.... That's short indeed:—and then,
To lose remembrance of the world; to be
As though 't were nought!—So vast a change, so sudden,
Appals...

OFFICER.

My orders are that I be prompt.

CATESBY.

Sir, I'll attend you.—Do I die alone?
What news of Brakenbury, Piercy, Norfolk,
Ratcliffe and Ferrers, Lovel, the lord Staffords?

OFFICER.

Lovel, with Humphrey Stafford and his brother,
Hath fled, as 't is supposed, to Colchester.
The rest have dyed the battle with their blood.

CATESBY.

Oh, Gloster, what a damning cause was thine!

Thou hadst a bond of my fidelity
More strong than oaths and imprecations holy;
Signed with the inn'cent blood I've shed to serve thee;
Sealed with my soul, and witnessed by my crimes!

OFFICER.

You are a soldier, sir, and know what 't is
To be confin'd by duty.

CATESBY.

I am ready.
Oh, God, have mercy!—'T is too late repentance.
And yet I'll try——Pardon, almighty Heaven;
For thou hast promised—There's comfort still—
Yet canst thou hear a wretch imbrued, like me,
With deeds which make the crimson stain of murder
Seem white as snow, and turn to milky paleness:
The black damnation of abhorred sacrilege?
Make perjury look fair? Oh no, thou canst not!—
Pardon, Omnipotent! Oh, pardon, pardon!

[*Is led away.*

OFFICER.

For this base wretch, whose use of cruel deeds
Has worn his sense of manhood that he sleeps,
He must be guarded. He hath borne his office
With more than needful harshness, still exceeding
The measure of his duty. [*Exit Officer.*

JAILOR (*awakening*).

Eh, what, is he gone? I thought so. If I have any custom of my dealing, I knew he would not be a long inmate here. And a bloody hound he was, as long as he was a leader in the chase. But he bayed me, at last; me, who never was guilty of those gripings of the heart that force salt-water from the eyes, and rob the lungs of their due inflation. If ever a hard soul deserved a hard pillow to the head, I've my deserts now. Yet I've seen those that have slept sound upon it, though nearer to their last sleep than I am. Farewell, the world! Adieu, grandeur! I can but dream of those things now. Heigho! the world's a mere hackneyed jade. I'll none of it. [*Sleeps again.*

SCENE V.—LONDON. *In the Bishop of* LONDON'*s Palace. King* HENRY *in Council. Earls of* OXFORD, SURREY, *and* DERBY; *Lord* W. STANLEY; MORTON *and* FOX; *Sir* R. CLIFFORD; *Sir* R. BRAY; *Sir* R. GUILFORD, *&c.*

HENRY.

Well met in council, noble peers. Sir Reginald,
What saith our loyal city? Have you stated
That Marquis Dorset and Sir Thomas Bourchier,
Our pledges for the means which France equipped
In our behalf, 't is fitting we redeem
With smallest loss of time? Do th' Londoners
Accord to the demand of certain sums
We ask to this intent? What answer they?

SIR R. BRAY.

My liege, I did present the forceful need
Which bowed your Highness long; till Brittany,
Moved by just love and nobleness, at length
Spread forty gallant sails to catch the wind,
Crossing the rude rough seas to do you right.

Next named I Landais and his wily workings.
But most of all spoke I of Charles of France,
Whose politic and meagre friendship gave,
For weighty stipend promis'd on assurance,
The means of war, without the hope of issue;
Ten thousand Frenchmen, very scum and froth
Of a disorder'd band, whose looks bespoke them
Famine-pressed knaves, a prey to carrion crows,
Rather than soldiers. I did still denote
Your personal endurances and danger;
Your valiant prudence oft in battle prov'd;
Your zeal unbated by your body's ills;
Your love unshaken by expectancy.

HENRY.

And did you speed?—This prologue is too long
For a fair tale.

SIR R. BRAY.

My sov'reign lord, the Londoners
Most heartily would strain their means, to cover
The present bareness; but the nerve o' th' will
Lacks power to do it right.

HENRY.

They do refuse?

SIR R. BRAY.

Not so, my liege; but could a moiety
Supply the measure of your present wants—

HENRY.

A moiety!

SIR R. BRAY.

Six thousand ready marks
Pass their prompt having. But most loyally
They bring your grace such sums as they can gather;
And, when the sun of your prosperity
Shall ripen their fair fortunes, they 'll compense
The briefness of the present, with advantage.

HENRY.

This plucks us short, for we have weighty reasons.—
France must be satisfied. But we have subjects
Who would drain dry their precious arteries,
Ere we should want for blood; and so we trust
To all true subjects for the worthy means
To free our word to all. Yet, though our title
Hath multiplied foundation, more than many

Whose sceptres have weighed heavy, still we stand
Within the judgment of our parliament;
Whom we would call together, but ourself
Do feel their interdiction and attainder.

LORD STANLEY.

Your grace doth poise 'gainst scruples what should be
Weighed in the scale of empires. What's the crown,
The badge and livery which Heaven doth give
To its anointed, if it have not power
To do away all flaws and stops of blood,
And make the fountain clear? For Heaven's election
Doth every meaner opposition out.
Earl Richmond was attainted; but th' attainder
Hath not his visage so begrimed, or set
Beyond Heaven's ken, that Heaven endures him not;
Since, with the virtue of its sovereign sword,
It girt his thigh, and on his regal brow
Placed its own diadem. Was Richmond banned?

But Henry's consecrate; and this his blessedness
Doth, in its huge conceptions, swallow up
Defects, attainders, and corruptive stains.

HENRY.

Concernments, in their nature delicate,
Must delicately be pursued; and though
My barefaced fortune grapples lustily
The height I've reached, yet do we think it politic,
For certain weighty reasons—('t is not conscience,
For my most scrupulous soul shrinks not from searching:
Nor is it timid doubt, for I can't fear;
And to suspect were idle)—Yet 't were prudent—
To leave no guardless door for treason's entrance—
That the assembled parliament reverse
The ban we suffer; and at once do fix
The crown to rest, remain, abide in us,
And in our body's heirs, eternally
So to endure, and in none other.

SIR R. CLIFFORD *(aside)*.

Ha!
Doth Lancaster say this?—But hush, and hear.

LORD W. STANLEY.

And may the heavens so light the pregnant torch
Of your blest nuptials, that who follows you—
The one part Lancaster, the other York—
Shall, in the bright commixture of his blood,
Be aim of all men's prayers.

HENRY *(aside)*.

Still York and York.—
[*Rising*] It is resolved. And should the loyal commons
Esteem it thus, 't is done. My faithful lords;
For your good counsels thanks. Here break we up.—
Morton, your ear. My lord of Oxford, list.

[*Exeunt all the lords, except* MORTON *and* OXFORD.

HENRY *(to* OXFORD*)*.

I have a task will fit your nature well.
Hear it proclaimed, that, by an act of grace,

All who have been our foes, or fought against us,
Shall keep their lives and states, if in one month
They fall into the ranks of due allegiance.
This see you done in th' hour, before the lords
Or commons can assemble. Speed you well.

[*Exit* OXFORD.

This must appear my deed. I'm crossed with York.
It is a fitful name; and, when I hear it,
It fevers my young greatness and my blood.
This Stanley is my mother's husband's brother;
And I have winked at his rich booty, won
In Bosworth Field. He put the crown on me:
But not for me or mine; he is all York.
I dare not say that all who cry, 'God save me,'
Do it for me; and, though I wear the crown,
It is not mine, mine own.—My worthy Morton,
There's many a traitor fall'n; and blood enough
Hath marked my giddy footing.

MORTON.

True, my lord;
The smallest blood is still enough: yet never
Was change so vast so bloodless.

HENRY.

It may be;
'T is like enough.—Thou art a holy man,
And I 'll believe thee.—Among those who fell,
Many did stand possessed of potent wealth,
Which, in the present chill necessity,
Might gloss our napless fortunes.

MORTON.

Are they not
Yours by the right of conquest?

HENRY.

True perhaps.
Yet, did we use our right, oh there be tongues,
Endued with such a bold mobility,
They 'd push us from our seat. I' th' parliament
It were weighed justice, but in us oppression:
Therefore I 'd have thee start this game to them;
That Gloster, Norfolk, Ferrers, Ratcliffe, Catesby,
Died full possessed of useful weighty means.
If, by thy training, they grow quick of scent,
Return and speak to me. Good things await
The man who doth this service to my state.

[*Exit* MORTON.

*Enter* SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

My liege, your highness is obeyed.

HENRY.

Sir Robert!
Well have you sped from Sheriff-hutton hither.

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

And with what secrecy your grace thought needful.

HENRY.

Why, this is very well. Now Gloster's nephew,
The son of Clarence, heir to Edward, Richard,
Blood of Plantagenet, I hold thee now!
Did any murmur as you passed along;
With armed horsemen by his side? Yes, surely,
Some murmured as you passed.

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

There ever are
Whose birthright's discontent. But those are few,
Who, in such rich beginnings, do not change
Their grumbling apprehension, for the hope
Of what your days shall teem with.

HENRY.

And you heeded
To have it rumoured that we purposed honour,
Much love, and safety to his noble person?

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

My liege, I did.

HENRY.

And in the Tower last night—
Said you not so?—last night?—the Tower?

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

My life
Shall be the pledge of my fidelity.

HENRY.

Thou art a man so temperately combined,
So modestly reputed in men's mouths,
That thy observance must be charactered
'Twixt all extremes.—Touching this son of Clarence;
How has report or knowledge brought him to thee?
What manner is the youth?

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

One little tuned
To the high notes of greatness; poorly stored

With such appurtenance and royal stuff
As suit a kingly venture; never strained
Through texture of fine filaments, which purge
The dregs and dross of nature. Yet even so,
That while 't is grief he be curtailed thus,
'T were pity he were other.

HENRY.

So I 'd have him.
Well, 't is enough of him.—Elizabeth
Will soon arrive. Where parted you from her?

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

A few hours' march from York I took my leave,
To post into your presence with these news.

HENRY.

But she will soon arrive?—

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

Within a day;
She cannot tarry longer.

HENRY.

All is good.
And now, Lord Willoughby de Brook, for such
Thou shalt be—

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

My most gracious liege—

HENRY.

Rise, 't is my will. The best of majesty
Is when it bids be happy. Fare thee well.

SIR R. WILLOUGHBY.

Long health and happiness attend your grace!
For on your life doth England's safety hang:
None else could wield her shattered sceptre, none
Could piece the broken remnants of her fate,
And make her whole again. On you doth sit
Her state to come, her power, her destiny;
And may high Heaven protect them all in you!

[*Exit.*

HENRY (*alone*).

Our thanks, my noble lord..... He flatters me;
And I would have him think I can be flattered.
The weak may build opinion of their strength;
The strong wax mightier by concealment.—So;
The Princess comes.—Why, marry her, and then.....
No, no; my crown shall be entire; my robes
Shall not be patched with York's pale colours.
No;
I will be king;—king by my right anointed,
As I am by my sword. The shifting rabble,

Ay, and these lords, hold York most dear in heart.
They speak her gracious; but no grace divine,
Save that of Heaven, shall king me.—And her mother,
A whilom queen.... Nay, that's a meddling dame:—
She won weak am'rous Edward by her tears;
And helped me in such kind I needs must fear her.
And ever 't is the curse of policy,
Whose scent is rank, that they who once have smelt it
Can wind it from afar. The sword we use
Doth teach us how it cuts, and may teach others.
Therefore.... But first our coronation—after—
We 'll shew the shifting rabble, and these lords,
Ay, and York's self, we can be king without her—
Why after, let her graciously receive
What we shall graciously bestow. Away;
No bent of mine shall sicken or decay. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*A Street in London. Enter Lord* W. STANLEY *and Sir* R. CLIFFORD.

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

But not to utter York, when he did say
The crown should rest, abide, remain in him,
And in his body's heirs! What is in York,
That he can't name it? Does it stick in 's throat,
Or parch his tongue t' th' roof? Oh tell me wherefore
This Harry Bosworth could not give it shape.

LORD W. STANLEY.

Clifford, this rage is as if summer's heat
Should issue from December's snowy cloud.
Thy father, for that York in battle sent
Thy father's father to an honoured grave,
Did act bad vengeance; slew a kneeling child,
Defenceless, spotless, almost infant Rutland,
York's greenest hope; gave to his captiv'd father
A napkin, with his precious blood made rich;
And when he washed the ruby drops away,
With the soft pearls that 'neath his eyelids grew,

That foes were moved to weeping, he did stab
him.
Is Clifford derogate?

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

Not so, Lord Stanley.
Th' account of vengeance haply stands acquitted
Betwixt our houses, and I may begin
To score anew on a blank page of justice.

LORD W. STANLEY.

Why then be just, and bridle in opinion.
It is a fiery steed, whose untamed hoof
Doth tread on circumstance, and overbound
The mere of fair proportion: if thou master 't,
'T will bear thee bravely; if thou give it rein,
Beware the spur of accident.—Farewell. [*Exit.*

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

From the mishapen will of moody Richmond
I bode some ill. My knowledge oft hath noted
That rooted love, whose stiff and knotted fangs
Have outproved many tempests, is giv'n o'er
To bide new storms again, while young regard
Is fed with richest compost.—I grow old
In Lancaster's rank love, and wither in 't.

He thinks me root-bound there. — How York would smile,
Were Clifford's love transplanted to his cause!
Then be it so:—York, I am thine till death.

[*Exit* CLIFFORD.

*(The Procession of* HENRY*'s Coronation passes over the Stage. Then some Citizens, who had been among the spectators, advance.)*

FIRST CITIZEN.

So sad a coronation England hath never seen. There was never a shout or a greasy cap sent up to heaven.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Why, 't was without its better part. Well, he has it now. Lords and Commons vie with each other in obsequiousness. They attaint, absolve, ordain, as he speaks.

THIRD CITIZEN.

And who 's most wronged in this is the Princess. We shall now see whether he 'll fill up the breach 'twixt York and Lancaster, by his marriage with her.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Nay, and if he do, he has not the less injured

her; for he claims the crown for himself and his descendants in his own right, not as holding any share of it from her; and admits her but as a foreign consort to his throne. If ever I cry "Long live Lancaster," it shall not be till York be tacked to it. But I may live to say "Down Lancaster, up York," and I am not alone of my calling.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*The Queen-dowager's Apartments in London. Enter the* QUEEN *and* PRINCESS.

QUEEN.

Methinks we have forgotten how to rail;
Or indignation choaks the utterance
Our griefs should have. I'll teach them to be loud;
For they shall cry to perjured Lancaster,
Though far as Ethiopia to the pole
Divide us from him.

PRINCESS.

Good my mother, patience.
Our fortune teacheth us it would be borne
With noble sufferance.

QUEEN.

Oh, thou sad suff'rer!
Talk'st thou to me of patience! Do not so;
Unless thou canst, in fame or memory,
Shew me a widow, mother, wife, or queen,
Bound by more capable array of wrongs
To banish patience. If thou canst do this,
Then, with my prostrate sorrows at her feet,
I 'll bow before her majesty of woe,
And be the fool of patience.—Hark, who comes?

*Enter Sir* T. BROUGHTON.

QUEEN.

Now, good Sir Thomas, it doth much amaze me
That one man should prove true.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

In bitter hour
I come to greet your highness.

QUEEN.

And with thanks,
Ill suited to oppressive bitterness,
I 'll thank you.—Now, what saith the world of York?
York hath been ill ere now, and men have wept;

But now our sorrow is of such a sort,
That all our wonted medicines fester in us,
And pity makes us mad.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Most gracious dame,
The morbid time is sore of thy infection,
And the diseased air is big with it.
There 's not a cheek we meet but 's character'd
By pale and loaded death; and men do drop
Like gorged flies in rich corrupted shambles.
Unwary sweatings, and malicious vapours,
Strike at the siege of living, and cut short
Their lazy pacing in the common streets.
Youth's tenure is usurped, and grandsires bear
Their offspring to the grave. Order is blind,
And fretted Nature wild with her own workings.

QUEEN.

I tell thee, Broughton, York hath lessoned Nature
To tear herself; she could not else have thought it.
But now, since ravenous and bloody York
Hath preyed upon itself, she doth confound
And swallow her own germs.—Fitzwalter comes.

*Enter Lord* FITZWALTER.

QUEEN.

Better with those sad looks, than many absent
Who do rejoice. Though what thou hast to
utter
Do bear them likelihood, fear not to speak.
What tidings bring you?

FITZWALTER.

Many shapeless things,
Th' uncertain issue of perplexed thoughts;
For, in the pitchy night of these dark times,
Men see not what hath form and circumstance,
Though they have sense and feeling such things
be.

QUEEN.

Then to begin—

FITZWALTER.

Edward Plantagenet,
Ta'en late from Sheriff-hutton to the Tow'r,
His death is doomed. I hear it bruited far.

QUEEN.

Why this indeed!—But our past sufferings
Have drained the precious fountains of our tears,

That not a liquid sorrow now remains.
They'll call it policy, I think, my lord;
Will they not so?..... But true — he is our nephew.
And, if my reck'ning fail not, he is cousin
To Edward's race:—a cousin much to fear—
For, with this cousin here, York were entire.
Now, by my life, it is a wise young king,
To cut the snake,—and part it, lest it join.
How like the bloody monster he hath slain
Doth Henry look!

FITZWALTER.

Oh, dare I, lady, speak
Aught more of what men say?

QUEEN.

Fitzwalter, on,
Although thy speech do blast me.

FITZWALTER.

Then 't is rumoured,
That, on the groaning night, when England lost
The promis'd sovereign of her hope, and thou
The fruit of thy blest womb, Richard of York
Escap'd the murderer, and—

QUEEN.

Oh, vain hope!
Here is no place for him; no, he is dead:
So good and gracious doth not breathe on earth.
I thought these eyes were drained; yet see, I
weep.
Oh, busy grief, officious memory,
That conjure up so many pretty forms
Of what I never shall behold again!—
No more of this. These drops shall be my last.
I wipe them off; and, with them, all conceits
Save how to sting this honeyed Lancaster.—
Now for revenge.—Fitzwalter, do 'nt believe
My Richard hath escaped. Yet I 've a thought....
It is a woman's.... Shall I tell it you?

FITZWALTER.

Most gracious dame—

QUEEN.

This rumour see thou cherish.
This is my Richard now. We 'll dress it out
With pomp and likelihood; give it a sceptre,
Hosts, and thrice-steeled legions; with a throne
Of fringed purple, and all circumstance
Of great caparison. We 'll make it halloo

To this poor moppet king, till it affright him
With urchin shapes and froward fantasies,
As schoolboys their besotted pedagogue.
'T is heaped up here. My mind is thronged with it.

*Enter an Officer.*

OFFICER.

Sir Robert Willoughby attends your Highness,
And begs some conf'rence from the King.

QUEEN.

Indeed!

OFFICER.

It bodeth honour to your grace, and peace
To England; for his theme is marriage.

QUEEN.

Ha!
Now, since he's crowned, he sends to offer you
Your throne, your realm, your sway in right of him,
The plunderer who stole them. Gentle daughter,
Oh could I put my meaning in thy form!—
But let thy father's spirit shine through thee.

PRINCESS.

Heaven's ordinance be done!—How I do hold

My own regards, but as the loyal love
With which I burn toward England, this shall
shew.—
Come, let us meet him; and be this the day
That ends in quiet England's bloody fray.

# ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the King's Palace in London.*

*Enter King* HENRY; *Earls of* DERBY, OXFORD, SURREY; *the Bishops of Ely and Exeter, &c. as returning from the King's Marriage with the Princess.*

HENRY.

What shouts are these?

DERBY.

The people's acclamations
Tell mighty Heaven the rich accomplishment
Of his unmoved and registered decree;
And his blue front beats back their peals again
With prosperous increase.

HENRY.

Indeed!

DERBY.

My liege,
Such joy did never echo the loud cannon;
Did never shout before proud victory;
Never the streaming banners did assail
Of tearful fight.

HENRY.

Perhaps, my lord.... Here comes
One who can better say.—What doth this mean?

*Enter* LORD W. STANLEY.

LORD W. STANLEY.

It is the voice of rapture, that acclaims
The people's joy. I heard a greasy lout,
With unwip'd lips just shining from a feast,
Welcome back plenty; and a drowsy knave,
With thin and fluted voice, give hail to peace.
There 's not a craftsman at his board to-day;
For all have don'd their trimmest furniture,
To gape upon the sight; and none of them,
But drunk with joy and revel, shall reel home
To dream of shows again, and feasts, and cups.

HENRY *(aside)*.

Out on the shallow herd!

LORD W. STANLEY.

I saw the Queen,
Like a graced pinnace, top th' unmanner'd waves
That throng'd to meet her; and, with pretty motion,
Tossed to and fro upon their curly waftage,
Assay to part the yesty opposites,
Whose wild foam cross'd her undistinguished way;
And her tall head she bowed in courtesy,
As she did catch the winds, that follow'd her
With loving clamour and loud ecstasy.

*Enter the (late Princess, now) Queen* ELIZABETH, *with Guards, Attendants, &c.*

HENRY.

Well, we have weightier matter now to treat.
Rebellion wakes .... Treason doth show its head ....
We must to arms.—Call in the messenger
That's from the north.

QUEEN.

Trust me, I am most sad
That such ungentle thoughts disturb your peace.

HENRY.

How say you, madam? Here's intelligence
That our wild north hath stirred.... But you
shall hear.

*Enter a Messenger.*

HENRY.

Sirrah, how now. Tell us, and more distinctly,
The sum of thy reports; for they are loaded,
And each particular demands an ear.
What's in the north?

MESSENGER.

Sedition and revolt.

HENRY.

But where, and whence, and who are the abet-
tors?—
On what pretext?

MESSENGER.

Lincoln, my liege, is full
Of discontent; and loyalty is shaken
By secret emissaries, that one push

Will heave it from its seat. The word is York;
For that an heir of Lancaster doth sit
Upon York's throne.

HENRY.

Is not this fearful, madam?
And yet it frights us not.

QUEEN.

Who thinks to stir
In the behalf of York, yet arms 'gainst Henry,
He is a rebel, and a foe to York.
There is no York but I. I am the heir
Of the two Edwards—woe that so I be!—
And he who is York's true and loyal subject
To me owes all his duty: but that right,
With free and open hand, I gave away,
When I did give myself. York hath no friends
But such as homage here; nor is there York
But what is Lancaster; for York and Lancaster
Are now one blood, one marrow, and one life.

HENRY *(aside)*.

Some, now, would smile at this, and call it well:
And 't is well, seeming; therefore it doth chafe
me.
Would she were peevish, stubborn, querulous,

Proud, sullen, lacking good and gracious gifts;
Made up of froward and unformal wills,
Such as men hate.

*Enter* LORD WILLOUGHBY.

LORD WILLOUGHBY.

My liege, there stands without
A man from York, who tells...

HENRY.

More tales of treason!—
Well, we can hear them. Let him back again,
And tell these men of York we'll be among them,
Ere they can take their arms, caparison'd
Like thundering Jove.... These are but sorry nuptials;
For we must change the tabor and the lute
For the steep wounding drum. Our wedding-day
We'll hold with proper joy, when we have quell'd
Th' uneasy north and this tempestuous York.—
Stir all our friends in Lincoln. We will join them.

Use speed; for we shall tread so close upon you,
Your tale will not be told ere we arrive.

[*Exit Messenger.*

Madam, doubt not that we shall soon return;
And there will be a time for silken peace,
When this wide realm yields to my single sway.

[*Exit King* HENRY, *with lords, attendants, &c.*

LORD W. STANLEY.

The king is sorely shaken; and I fear me
'T will be most sore to England and to York.

QUEEN.

Lord William, when shall we have news from York?
The time will grow most heavy old with us,
Till we have heard how cheerly goes the king.

LORD W. STANLEY.

In some five days or six.

QUEEN.

Six mildew'd days,
In which no wholesome thing can blow for me.
Oh, woe is me! Which way soe'er I turn,
I fret high Heaven against my well-belov'd!
To Lancaster I owe my love and duty:

When I would say, 'Heaven succour Lancaster!'
The breath of York that fill'd my early days
Mingles another sound with 't.

LORD W. STANLEY.

Yet one prayer
Your highness may proclaim: "Heaven succour England!"
And loud amens shall be responsive to 't.

QUEEN.

Heaven succour England!—Didst thou think, Lord Stanley,
How ill all's here, thou 'dst feel and weep for me;
For I have many tears to fall for others.
Now, Heav'n befriend us all; and so, farewell.

LORD W. STANLEY.

Most gracious Queen, farewell. *(Aside.)*—I do perceive
Thine honoured grief, which is ashamed to shew
The food that feeds it. Sad and worthless hour,
When love doth yield to hate, and right to power! [*Exit.*

QUEEN.

Oh Henry, thou hast robbed me of myself!
And thy unkind suspicions barter me,
My truth, my honour, and my loving frankness,
For properties of base and false conceits,
Which I do nothing owe. My prayers still be,
Heaven shelter England's majesty in thee.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Another Apartment in the Palace.*

HENRY *(alone).*

Clifford to Flanders!—'t is a push indeed!
And Margaret holds her wily bosom open
To all who are our foes!—Well, we must try
If we can reach them there. Oh, unseen power
Of searching gold, thou hast more marvels done
Than wing a secret 'cross the ocean hither.

*Enter* MORTON *and* FOX.

HENRY.

My lords, I did require your presence here.
Through your great holiness Heaven's eye doth shine;
And we would have you fix it on our foes,
To tent and prove them.

MORTON.

Which be they, my liege?

HENRY.

They whose lean loyalty doth starve our cause
On hollow courtesy; who pay knee homage;
Why cry "God bless us" with distorted eyes;
Who pay constrained service to our will,
And chide their hand that acts it. See you not
How many near our person do distaste us,
And would disrelish us among our subjects?

MORTON.

Near to your sacred person?

HENRY.

Ay, our palace,
Our very couch, is tainted. That way Prudence
Points his firm finger. How now; Edward's widow
Dares rail at us aloud, and tax our power.
A busy prating woman!

FOX.

But a woman,
And therefore to be mocked.

MORTON.

Nay, my good lord,
She must be looked to; many stick to her.

HENRY.

Such should our churchmen be. You both have tasted
Of our small bounty. But our holy church
Hath treasures still on earth.—How say you now?
Clifford hath fled to Flanders.

MORTON.

Ha!—to Flanders!

HENRY.

Where our good pious aunt holds practices
Against our state and person, might make one
Less holy blush to think on 't. And our mother
Is her intelligencer here.—Know you
Some loyal needy subject, who, for love
Of us, would mingle with our foes abroad,
And wear a mask? For every weighty truth,
He shall be told its counterpoise in gold.

But most we would win Clifford back again.
Could we but find the traitors who are near us,
Our state would be much sounder!

MORTON.

What we can
Toward your state, your Highness shall command.

HENRY.

About it, then.—And, list you—to our palace;
Watch, tent, and search 't. The nearest to our person
Are hugest in our apprehension.—Go.
You've our authority to teach suspicion
To aim most high.

[*Exeunt* MORTON *and* FOX.

HENRY (*alone*).

These busy meddling women!
But she whom we can reach shall be well look'd to.
Elizabeth, albeit true and gentle—

Ay, there's the sting, for all men's loves are
hers;
And their affections, which should marshal
mine,
Mislead to hateful thoughts. — Now to her
mother.
I will not fear her long—no, not an hour!
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Queen-dowager's Apartment.*

*Enter the Queen-dowager.*

QUEEN.

Married, indeed! and this, my son-in-law,
Is but the thief and robber of our race....
A king, forsooth! and this great lord of Eng-
land
Is but our scourge and executioner.—
Now am I much more lost, more sunk than
ever:
And there's no English heart to feel for me!
The tyrant has bereft me of their thoughts.

My daughter, from her height, dares not look
on me;
The people have forgotten hope in me;
And the rent factions of their torn estate
Have knit to make my misery. I'm alone
In this new woe; and none do weep with me,
Save one or two poor wretches like myself,
Whose sorrows herd together. Tristful life!
Whose best days are but ushers to our tears,
And come the foremost to delude us on.——
How now, thou smilest!

*Enter Sir* T. BROUGHTON.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Clifford hath escaped.
A trusty friend, who saw him newly shipped,
Brings good report of it.

QUEEN.

From Flanders, then,
We may keep watch for comfort.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Lady Margaret
Holds out her flag to all distressed Britons;
And every hour the busy rumour grows—

Nor only grows, but as it swells it prospers—
That 't is no phantom, but the living York
Who late was guest within the French king's court,
And thence hath fled to Flanders.

QUEEN.

No, alas!
There 's no true hope in aught that 's founded there.
My smiling babes were murdered! But in this
We'll do as though 't were true.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

We shall find means
To learn of Clifford what forebodeth thence.

QUEEN.

The Cliffords were the butchers of my race,
Born friends to Lancaster. Yet, on my life,
So shallow is the cup of hope to me,
My deepest draught of it were their recomfort,
So on the proud neck of deceptious Richmond
They set their steeled heels; for he hath duped me,
Encompassed me with wiles.... What noise is this?

*Enter an Officer and Soldiers.*

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Unmannered groom! know you no better nurture
Than thus to break a lady's privacy?
You do forget she was the Queen of England,
And could command you once.

OFFICER.

Excuse my haste;
I am commanded to use speed and rigor.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

What is your business?

OFFICER.

With that royal lady.

QUEEN.

What, sir, with me?

OFFICER.

You must away with me.

QUEEN.

What doth this mean?

OFFICER.

You are my prisoner.

QUEEN.

Sir, I 'm your queen's Queen, and I gave her life.

OFFICER.

That matters not to me. I have my orders,
And must obey them, or—

QUEEN.

I say he 's mad.
But I 'll have right for this. I am not sunk
So low that every stripling dares insult me,
If he can grasp an ensign. . . . To my daughter—

OFFICER.

Hence, to a monastery at Bermondsey,
I 've orders to conduct you.

QUEEN.

Once, again,
I 'll to the queen, my child. She shall protect me
Against this raving boy.

OFFICER.

I do not rave;
But you must follow me.

QUEEN.

To Bermondsey!

OFFICER.

And in the instant.

QUEEN.

No, 't is I who rave. . . .
Is it a vision? . . . Tell me, what is this?
Shake from me this most horrible dream; and, oh,
Let not my waking be more agony!

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Bear bravely up. We 'll hear his mandate first.
What is your purpose?

OFFICER.

First, to bear this lady
With diligence to Bermondsey; and, next,
To seize on all her lands and moveables;
Her house, her goods, and all her property;
For which the king's good grace provides return
In place of better safety.

QUEEN.

Gracious God!
I have moved strangers by my tears; in lieu
Of a lost husband and his private fortunes,
My griefs did win a king and kingly honours.
I, that did melt great Edward by my sorrows,

Now open all the sluices of mine eyes
To wash the bitterness that steels that heart,
And not a drop can reach it. All my life
Hath been a dream to me, a golden dream,
Where crowns and pageants glittered for a
while;
But, like a wretch who climbeth in his sleep,
And treads on air, a dreadful crash awakes me.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Oh, let me share thy fortunes.

QUEEN.

To deny thee,
Were not to own thee worthy.—Come, lead
on,—
What will you have of me? look round you
well.
The robe I wear I may bear hence; some jewels,
A woman's playthings: and this too; look on 't,
If you would know what 't is to be a king.
[*Shewing a small picture of Edward.*]
'T is to be made of every contrary
That swells the pamper'd Richmond.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Oh, this rage
Cannot avail us now.

QUEEN.

Yet hear a little,
For I am fraught with things that comfort me.
Never shall Richmond's ill-conceiving mind
Breed aught but malice and dissev'ring wrath;
For he doth hug dear York to smother her.
Oh murd'rous breach, filled with my heart's best
blood!
I'll go, where nothing can betide me worse
Than to behold this Richmond. Do with me
Now as you list; but never let us meet.—
Oh God, oh God! my soul hath fed on rage,
And all my thoughts are big with tasting it.

SCENE IV.—*An Apartment in the Duchess of* BURGUNDY'*s Palace, at Sluis, in the Netherlands. The Duchess of* BURGUNDY, *the Lady* BRAMPTON, *the Archduke* PHILIP, *with various Attendants, are discovered reading or at work.*

DUCHESS.

See here, young Philip; look upon these threads.
How many truths are pregnant in the fiction
That grows upon this canvas!... Saturn swallowing
His children.... Even so doth time, ambition,
Contentious policy, rebellious broils.
It is the image of revolted days,
That one by one bring forth their monstrous births,
And then devour them.

PHILIP.

And doth war devour
The soldiers which it makes?

DUCHESS.

It doth, young prince;

Feeding upon the heroes it hath made,
And framing them for that.

PHILIP.

Say, shall I read
Another of these tales, a loving tale?
Here's one of Bradamonte, a knight of France,
Who loved fair Imogen. It much affecteth me,
In that she bore the Frenchman no good will.

DUCHESS.

E'en what you list.

PHILIP.

Or here's a braver legend,
Of twelve bold knights of France who did encounter
Twelve bolder British swords . . .

LADY BRAMPTON.

Hold, none of that.
Her highness will not hear of Britain.

DUCHESS.

Now,
Good sooth, say you of Britain? British swords
Were ever hard enough.

LADY BRAMPTON.

For would she so,

I could speak truer things, though none so
old.

DUCHESS.

Where did you hear them?– But 't is one to me.
England and I have made a long divorce.
Shame to you both! You have deluded me
To speak of it again. It shakes my age
To hear these things; and memory silvers o'er
My locks to think of them.—I bid you silence.

LADY BRAMPTON.

Then low lie York, since York doth push away
The pillars of his house. I will but tell
Some new-fled lords they may take back to Richmond
The fealty York disowns; then, sit me down,
And carve me patchwork.

DUCHESS.

What say you to me?—
What lords are these?

LADY BRAMPTON.

Lords who have fled to York.

DUCHESS.

From England?

LADY BRAMPTON.

Even so.

DUCHESS.

How long is 't since
I spoke with one from England?... Let me see.
Ay, then I ceased to be an Englishwoman...
But not to be of York; and, with that blood,
I do inherit all the rage, revenge,
That ever was our due to Lancaster.—
Where be these lords? I 'll speak with them a while.

*(Lady* BRAMPTON *goes out, and returns with the lords.)*

LADY BRAMPTON *(introducing them).*

Lords Congreshall and Stafford; Nevil, Taylor,
Sir Robert Clifford—

DUCHESS.

Ha! a bloody name!
I never met it but besmeared with blood.
Why do you speak it here?

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

Most royal lady,
Seek not my honour in my forefathers.

Nor judge me by their acts; but rather think,
As they were foes to York, so I to Lancaster;
As they did shed York's blood, so will I Lancaster's:
And bloody expiation will I make,
For all the wrongs your house hath had of mine.

DUCHESS.

What surety bring you?

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

I am come deputed
From the Lord William Stanley, and the chiefs
Who would restore you to your house's honours.

DUCHESS.

Ha! must I think of honours!— Know you not
I am a poor recluse, worn grey without them?
Think you they will unload my back of years,
Or give a youthful plumpness to my limbs?
No; should the tide of honours flow upon me,
I could not bear their surging billows round me.
I shall but taint your cause; and carrion flies,
Drawn by the morbid humour of my mind,
Will suck its marrow. Take your refuge here,
But live, like me, withdrawn. Help me to teach

Young Philip to be great: he'll greatly thank
you,
And with true greatness pay you.

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

Soul of York,
Indeed the heart—

DUCHESS.

Oh, sir, I'm soul of nothing;
I have no soul for aught that's of this world.
Do I not stand beside the slipp'ry mouth
Of my deep-delved grave, and hear you not
The raven croak my knell? Go carry honours
To those who sweat for them. Heap them on
honours
So high, that they may totter to the dust.
Be they as poison to the tongue that tastes
them!
As venom to the blood of those who wear
them!—
Such was their loss to me.

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

The Duke of York

Hath fled from France; and, as we hear by th'
way,
To seek your highness here.

DUCHESS.

The Duke of York!
York has no duke: — Why do you come to
mock me!

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

Young Richard, son of Edward, is York's duke.

*Lady* BRAMPTON *introduces* WARBECK.

DUCHESS (*seeing* WARBECK.)

What vision 's this?—Sure you would make me
mad!—
Whence and what art thou? Hast thou rooted
up
The bowels of the earth, and comest again
To see th' inverted world?... Well, I 'll not say
What I have seen: these lords, knowing I'm
old,
Will think me crazed. Yet, as I live, 't is
there!...
Hast thou no name among the file of men?

WARBECK.

Richard, most gracious lady, is my name:
And, for my rank, I hold no higher place,
But yet as high, as English Duke of York.

DUCHESS.

'T is not that witness which suborned nature
Hath put upon thy cheek; those arched brows,
Through which dead Edward peeps; no, nor those lips,
Tuned by false echo to repeat his voice,
That can deceive me. These are counterfeit,
A brittle coinage of my thought-worn brain,
Which I will dash to pieces.—Still it is!
I've shot mine eye-balls from the crown to th' sole,
Quite through his form, and find it perfect Edward.—
Can Nature sport it thus?

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

As like to this
Was Richard, whom I saw an infant once,
As youth to manhood.

DUCHESS.

Either go, in peace,

Unheard; or, being proved a counterfeit,
Resolve to meet unheard-of agonies.
Who never talks of comfort is our friend;
But he who pulls us from our apathy,
To set us on the balance of our fears,
Pois'd betwixt them and hope, why he... oh, he
Hath wrought an engine of dark Erebus,
To make our hell even here!

WARBECK.

First then, oh Nature,
That, with thy sightless and eternal hand,
Hast made me as I am, that doubt itself
Is staggered into some shape of belief,
I give thee thanks! Yet where shall I begin
To tell the tragic title of my woes!—
Should I relate...

DUCHESS.

Nay, speak not.—Clifford, list...
"Hath fled from France," thou saidst?

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

I said it, lady.

DUCHESS.

York never fled; and he belies the blood

That he would claim.—And wherefore fly from
France?
Hadst thou been York, indeed, the royal Charles
Had given his sceptre and his might to boot,
To shield thee from all chance.—I ban thee
hence,
Without more speech; for this alone hath proved
How false thou art.

WARBECK.

It proves me false, alas!—
Oh, who doth spread a toil to catch a yeanling,
Or cram his loaded cannon 'gainst a moth?
A breath doth puff them out. But they who
hate me
Do it by powerful and desperate means,
And in their rage my root of greatness grows.
Nay, read my truth in this discomfiture;
For I am one too high to stand by kings,
And be no higher than I seem to be.
Most rich, most poor, whose riches make his
need!
Most strong, most weak, whose strength is his
defeat!

DUCHESS.

His words, his look, his voice!... but I've a thought
Which does not leave me my true judgement free....
Why, what is this? Methinks I stand among you
As once in England at my brother's court,
And I again am English. I have lived
So long recluse, that I must crave your leave...
This unused sight o'erpowers me. I will beg
Your counsel in good time——*(aside)* for you do point
The way I would be led.——Use your good pleasures. [*Exit.*

LORD CONGRESHALL.

Is not this wonderful?

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

If we had heard it,
We could not have believed it. This is strange,
That death should render up its antique prey
To reign o'er kingdoms. Yet more certain knowledge
Hold I of nought, than this.

WARBECK.

No miracle,
Save that which saved me, works in my behalf.
And though, by ancient proof and circumstance,
By haggish rumour and wild fame, you know
That our fifth Edward, with his brother York,
Was foully murdered, yet can I disprove it;
For, knowing I am Richard, I do live.
And if, by greater proof and circumstance
Than shew him murdered, I do prove him living,
Let it so help me in your noble minds
To think that I am he.

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

I know it well;
And every lineament that time hath swollen
Bears yet the likeness of its infancy,
Such as I saw it once. Here, then, I kneel,
To pay my first-born duty to my king;
And never shall this knee rise from the earth,
Till my great sovereign, Richard Duke of York,
Bid me to stand.

WARBECK.

Arise, Sir Robert Clifford,
The eldest of our subjects. I could weep
At this new name: it feelingly reminds me
I want the power to bless you.

*All the Lords.*

Long live Richard,
The rightful heir of York, great Edward's son!

*Enter* LADY BRAMPTON.

LADY BRAMPTON.

Her highness, moved with the great occasion,
Thus bids me say to you:—That she is English,
And well remembers what it is to be so.
She heartily repents her of the rashness
That did condemn, unheard, the blood that claims
Acquaintance with her heart; yes, heartily.
And, that you all may witness her repentance,
She doth invite you to the solemn hearing,
Which, with your patience, shall be held tomorrow.

WARBECK.

We will attend her highness; and, mean time,

I will confront your lordships with such proof
As shall win half your judgments; what is further
We 'll keep to greet our royal aunt withal.
Then, when tomorrow's sun shall shine on us,
'T will make new day to England and to me.
Be it but known that my great father's sister,
Margaret of Burgundy, doth own my blood,
And kings shall beg to be mine officers;
Yea, seek the meanest office of my troop,
To right me 'gainst usurped authority.—
Commend us to her highness; we 'll attend her.

[*Exeunt.*

# ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Duchess of* BURGUNDY'*s Palace.* WARBECK *is discovered with the English Lords round him. The* DUCHESS *and Lady* BRAMPTON *near them.*

SIR R. CLIFFORD *and Lords.*

Long live the king of England! long live Richard!
The rightful heir of York, and Edward's son!

DUCHESS.

Shame, then, to me. How does their zeal reproach me?—
My lords, you lead me where I should be foremost.
I do but follow you.——(*To* WARBECK) White rose of England,
Great Edward's image! living memory

Of his dead lineaments! sole precious vial
Of all our blood! brave metal of our race!
That, being touched, doth give a silver sound,
Making sweet music to my soul, all hail!
All hail, great York! hail the white rose of England!

WARBECK.

Oh, give me breath to thank you! Joy so great
Hath made me dumb. 'T is not that I am king,
But that thy blood doth own me.

DUCHESS.

I 'll not weep
To see my brother's image in his son;
No, nor to hear the crosses York hath borne.
When thou art seated on the throne of England,
We 'll cast a look behind us, and so weep.—
Where be thy guards, thy sceptre, and thy power?
Where thy great waving banners? Where thy crown?
Alas, poor York, thou art without all these;
And men deny thee majesty and state,
Which the great King of kings has given. Thou art

The Lord's elect, and men do say thee nay;
Heaven lifts thee up, and hell would pull thee down.
Awake, great York! and, on thine iron side,
Draw thy bold might to fight the cause of Heaven!—
Oh, this old blood of mine is English still!
And, though 't is thicken'd by the frost of years,
It nimbly paces through my arteries.—
Where be my guards? call all my troops together.

[*The guards enter, and parade round* WARBECK; *during which time* CLIFFORD *and others place a crown upon his head.*]

DUCHESS.

Why, this is well; now York is like himself.
Hadst thou come thus, the blaze of majesty
Had thawed my doubts. E'en so was Edward once.
So, in his blessed youth, he stood aloft
Pre-eminent o'er men; and in his eye
Was great command; and, in his witching hand,
Th' imperial sceptre was a rod of charms;

His crown a magic circle of great love;
And all the incantations of sweet grace,
Which meaner creatures make their pageantry,
For him won mighty realms. But, oh, beware;
For in the late and after hours of life
He did bestow himself with bad neglect
To ill-shaped wantonness, which did pursue him,
And hunt him from his seat. Belove thy partner,
No way thy master. Be not confident
To trust the hum'rous vision of thine eye
In gazing on too fair a perspective;
For beauty, that doth well unto itself,
Is bane to kings who worship it.

WARBECK.

Fear not.
Kings may not choose but for the public weal,
In the which hope I live.

DUCHESS.

Sweet, go thou forth
Girt with my blessing! Thou great God of power,
Edge his keen sword; and be thy thund'ring note

His great artillery, which angels guide!
Spread high thy fiery banners o'er the sky,
Clouding death's day to Richmond! If, perchance,
We bear the weight of our unransom'd sins,
Let it not sink us, but be merciful
Rather than just!

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

All is prepared, my liege.—
Oh, sea-girt Britain, we shall compass thee;
And, with great Neptune, to thy briny shores
Come a huge tide of warriors.

DUCHESS.

See yon Clifford!
With what a witless and a wand'ring eye
He glances at the world! His hanging cheek,
Flushed with weak blood, doth lack support and strength;
His thin lank brows do start from one another;
And in his gait, demeanor, and his habit,
There is nor form, respect, nor composition,
To make a man. Trust none that look like him;
For his conceptious spirit doth disdain
Such weak suggestions as befit its bulk;

And a great purpose sinks it.—Now, my lords,
Speed your good cause. — *(Aside.)* Yet is there
one among you
I would were not so near us.—Live you well.
[*Exeunt lords.*
Beware of this same Clifford. He is vain,
Weak, shifting, querulous, and full of harms.
His hate to York is his inheritance,
Which he puts by to suit his this day's humour;
And will tomorrow call it constancy,
To take't again with usury. *(Exit* WARBECK).
—Now, royalty,
Here is thy mirror.—Look, and know thyself
In this mock majesty; for 't is to thee,
As thou to Heaven. Look, and be pale at it.
The burnish'd sceptre, and the jewell'd crown,
The silken tiar, and the plaited robe,
That puff thee out, office as well for this.
Proud meekness, abject scorn, bow low to it.
All modes and forms are servants to its will.
The pomp that feeds thee is its caterer,
Nor ever asks its title.—Oh, vain world,
Thy hourly use hath shrunk me!

LADY BRAMPTON.

Thinks your Highness
The youth can so maintain him in his robes,
He will not fail?

DUCHESS.

Tush, do not dare to fear it.
They say that infants grow to what we make them.
'T is so with the ripe man; for none so poor,
But wears the garb our rich opinion lends him,
As it sat fitting to him; and some natures
Grow to the garment. Thus, by seeming virtuous,
We lose the taste of vice; and evil purpose,
Familiar with a fair and goodly outside,
Becomes the thing that hid it.

SCENE II.—*The Council Chamber in the Tower.*

*Enter Sir* R. GUILFORD *and Sir* R. EDGECOMBE.

SIR R. GUILFORD.

Know you the motive of this hasty summons?

SIR R. EDGECOMBE.

Not I, my lord. This nimble-footed night
Did ride so swiftly, by the speed I used
To overtake the minute of our meeting,
It did not leave me time for much enquiry;
And I had thought to hear the cause from you.

*Enter another Lord of the Council.*

LORD.

Hear you the news? 'T is blown about by ill and contrary winds; and all faces, as it touches them, grow pale at it.

SIR R. GUILFORD.

What is this?

LORD.

The strange phantom of the Lady Margaret's conjuring up hath sailed from Flanders, and is now at hand; but upon which of our shores no man can say.

SIR R. EDGECOMBE.

Then will it breed ill blood in England, and 't is no doubt the cause that some has been already let — the Lords Fitzwalter, De Montford, Ratcliffe, Dawbeny, and others; for 't is

not credible so wise and politic a prince should deal thus but upon good grounds.

LORD.

He hath indeed the name of politic; and it seemeth wise in others to find more in the thoughts and actions of such men than ever they thought of acting. But chance oft doth for us what we cannot shape for ourselves; and often what we never thought of shaping. As great as Alexander has been less than I am, because he came not into the world at the head of an empire.

SIR R. GUILFORD.

The king hath, notwithstanding, cause to smile; for the Queen promises fair to his marriage bed, that in good time she will produce him happy issue.

SIR R. EDGECOMBE.

Heaven grant a male! No heir had ever better title to a throne, than such a king shall have.

LORD.

'Tis said, too, that Sir Robert Clifford is returned in secret from Flanders, with such

intelligence as much fortifies our present weakness.

SIR R. GUILFORD.

Heaven grant it so.—But, lo, the King appears.

*Enter King* HENRY, *with Lords* OXFORD, DERBY, W. STANLEY, WILLOUGHBY; *the Bishops of* ELY *and* EXETER; *Sir* R. BRAY; *and all the Council.*

HENRY.

The cause and matter of our interview
Are briefly thus:—When Treason 'gins to lour,
And from his filthy cavern dares be bold,
We must our aptest instrument awake,
To pull him from his den.—Read here, my lords,
How near we stood to ruin, and the proofs
That we have those among us must be feared.

OXFORD.

Th' integrity and soundness of the realm,
Whose mantle, piled to the uncover'd threads,
Is shredded by contention, start at this.

HENRY.

But we can call into this presence one
Who shall speak more to you than I can say,
Touching this subtle compact of foul minds.—
Bring in Sir Robert Clifford.

LORD W. STANLEY.

What means this?

HENRY.

It shall appear if we have dealt too harshly
With the offending and rebellious lords,
Whose fate hath moved some pity; or if more
Of this same ri'tous blood be still to let.

*(Guards bring in Sir* R. CLIFFORD.)

LORD W. STANLEY.

Where doth this tend? Is Clifford double traitor?

SIR R. CLIFFORD.

My liege and sovereign, on my knees I crave
True hearing of my cause; with such an issue
As I shall seek to win. My past demerits
I will wash out in streams of mine own blood,
So to your highness' weal I may contribute
An atom of my potency and strength.

HENRY.

Here kneels a foe and traitor to our cause,
Who would have fleshed his dagger in our side;
Who, worse than this, would have let loose the wolves
That howl upon the flat shores of our foes,
To prey on our fair mountains, and root up
The oak of England. Yet, for our great self,
He shall go free: the empire's cause, not ours,
We will award. Save England, save thyself!

CLIFFORD.

I do confess, that, on a fleeting thought—
Oh, sudden matter of long penitence!—
The motions and quick purpose of my soul,
I did, with musing gloom and melancholy,
Corrupt and sadden; and that, fed with humours,
I gave mine ear unto the perilous sounds
Of plots and treasons. I deliver up
These titles of my guilt, and complete proof
Against the lords whose missions I did act;
By whom deputed, and by whom seduced,

I was a whilom traitor, though e'en now
A very true repentant convertite.

*(Gives a paper.)*

HENRY *(having read).*

Ha! know you what is written? Here's a name,
Which, were it not an error of my sense,
Would sear my eyes. Is it well written so?
See it, my lords, and speak it. Is it thus?

*Lords (reading).*

Lord William Stanley!

HENRY.

Do mine ears conspire
To call my reason fool? This jot of false
Makes all my credence totter.

LORD W. STANLEY.

Your great highness
Does me but right in your most gracious judgement,
When you do free me of such black reproach
As here is used t'asperse me: and I pray,
Since that suspicion on the whitest fame
Doth leave some speck of soilure, that your grace

Will grant me justice, and a due revenge
Upon this traitor, doubly traitor, Clifford.

HENRY.

We will maintain it with the right of law,
As we have trust in thy true loyalty.—
Clifford, we bid thee speak as though th' accused
Were foreign to our love. Our heart shall be
The throne of equal justice.

CLIFFORD.

Dread, my lord,
What I will say, I thereto stake my life.
Lord Stanley, with the peers who died condemned,
Seeing me so enwrapt in melancholy,
Breeding ill thoughts, did thus encounter me,
After long parle:—that I should hence to Flanders,
Bearing their prosperous hopes to Margaret,
With all the concert of their purposes
Your grace hath been possest of; and moreover,
That, for among the discontented, many
Did waver in their doubts, I should indite
Such letters as should strengthen their belief

In the impostor, Warbeck. This, oh shame!
Most hopeless of forgiveness, I performed;
And did their credulous and easy minds
Win to deceit: when, in requital of it,
I was the tongue and minister that spoke
Their oaths of fealty to a wandering Jew,
Reputed heir to York and England's throne.
In this I labour'd with unwearied zeal,
For that Lord William Stanley—and hereby
I chief arraign him—ere I sailed for Flanders,
Declared to me his broad and rooted will,
If that the outcast Warbeck were in truth
The heir of York, never to wage him war,
Or stand in arms opposed.

LORD W. STANLEY.

Your highness knows
How I have stood in your dear love and favour;
Which have been poured with such an open hand,
That nought is left for me or mine to wish:
And can it be that I so soon neglect
The sunny climate of your kingly grace,
To ship me on the unknown ocean's back,
Or freeze upon the lap of hoary winter?

HENRY.

Not what we give, but what we do receive,
Secures thy faith. On the full tide of fortune
We do forget the streams that make it flow;
While they who toil to make our voyage light,
Do love the thing they save.

LORD W. STANLEY.

My gracious lord...

HENRY.

Nay, answer not; for we do owe thee much.
Thou didst most help the changeful tide of
battle,
And fix it on our side, in Bosworth Field.
It was a signal of that love should join us
Which put the crown into thy hand, thenceforth
To place it on my head; and we have found
Daily increase. I could not think it so,
Though thou thyself shouldst say it.

LORD W. STANLEY.

Honoured king,
This greatness throws me to the earth.

HENRY.

Go to.

Thou wert the parent of our greatness, and
Thou canst not choose but love it.—Come, arise.

LORD W. STANLEY.

Not till your grace hath heard me. I'm unworthy
To stand in such a presence.

HENRY.

Tell your thoughts,
That wrongfully so shake you.

LORD W. STANLEY.

I'm a traitor.

HENRY.

A traitor! Stanley traitor!

LORD W. STANLEY.

I have said.

HENRY.

Then whom shall kings believe?

LORD W. STANLEY.

What Clifford spoke,
I do most freely own. Better be dead
Than live an adder in your royal favour,
To poison by your sunshine.

HENRY.

I am sorry,
Most sorry, for it.—Whom shall I dare trust,
Since Stanley's false? Oh, such a stab as this
Doth ope our heart, and let the life-blood out;
And with it all that youth and love had treasured
Into its sacred centre. Such a wound
Makes pale man's image there; and, in his stead,
Sets hyen-like deceit and perjury.
Henceforward let no man his brother love;
Be there no pledge for friendship, since the hand
Which feeleth smooth is like the tiger's paw,
Ready to flesh itself.

LORD W. STANLEY.

I will withdraw,
To wait your highness' pleasure.

HENRY.

Stanley, hold!—
Treason's long arm doth compass round our throne.—
Oh, heavy knowledge, that doth teach my heart

The friend who seeks to stab it. Better live
Where no security has bound to love,
Than among men whom love cannot secure.
What can our fulsome natures keep from taint,
When damned interest blows them? Oh, my lords,
I 'm ill at heart.—I cannot look at this....
It galls my eyes.—Come, lead me from this sight.

[*Exit King* HENRY, *with the Lords on one side.* CLIFFORD *is led off on the other. Lord* W. STANLEY *remains alone.*

LORD W. STANLEY.

What have I said? The King doth scowl at me.
The lords who courted turn their faces from me.
I, who so late led crowds behind my path,
Now stand alone. They see what I did not;
And their recession doth advertise me
How I am sunk. Oh, slipp'ry ways of greatness,
Which honour, truth, and virtue, cannot climb,
How little have I known you! I toiled on
In th' open road of honesty, nor dreamed

Of all the covered ways that lead to ruin.
Too late I find, that to be honest here
Is to be worse than fool.—

*Enter an Officer.*

OFFICER.

His highness' order
Is, that I do attach thee of high treason,
Lord William Stanley: and my duty is,
You yield your sword to me.

LORD W. STANLEY.

Sir, here it is.
This sword hath done some service to the King.
At Bosworth his left wing was overpowered;
I flew to beat the victors from their prey,
And spread contagious fear throughout their ranks,
That the great day was Richmond's. Take my sword.
May he who next shall wear it, use it better!—
I thank thee, Heaven, I am no soldier now!
I would not my true falchion raise to smite
A hair of York; for, by my sacred thoughts,

If there were right on earth, this crown and sceptre,
This realm and majesty, are his true heritage.—

*Enter a second Officer.*

SECOND OFFICER.

Sir, I've his highness' warrant.... Mighty heaven!—

LORD W. STANLEY.

Well, sir, what would his highness? What he would
Your sudden silence tells. He hath my sword—
A soldier's honour. Would he have my life?
In God's name be it done!

SECOND OFFICER.

I'm glad to see
You're so prepared.

LORD W. STANLEY.

By heaven, if all like me,
Who cherish York, dared tell their spirits boldly,
Then this Lancastrian Harry low were laid;
Or, ere this year were old, the tithe of England

Would wear their lives but loosely. I have steered
My little bark amid the stormy waves
Of factions, treasons, and conspiracies;
Yet could not 'scape the quick and shallow sands
That lie dispersed in the unseen depths
Of a king's favour. When this sea was smooth,
I trusted it, and dreamed I saw reflected
My image there; but, as I gaz'd upon it,
It sunk beneath me, and upon the point
Of a rude rock it shattered all my fortunes.
Yet I've one plank, and that shall never leave me:
It bears me on the mighty billows' top,
And my soul rides it bravely—Honour.——
Think you not men will say of me, my death
Was somewhat hard?

SECOND OFFICER.

And in their justice curse
The tongue that utters it.

LORD W. STANLEY.

Nay, say not so.—
The attributes and qualities of men

Are children of occasion, which conceives
Our good and evil as the soil wherein
Their seeds do quicken; and their praise or censure
Our time and we must share them. Kings do stand
Within this rule more special, and most special
Henry of Richmond; therefore, curse him not.
Bating his hate to York, he is most prudent,
Valiant, and frugal; just in framing laws,
And less ambitious than he's wise or wary.
Yet after-times will call him cold and cruel;
And add a meaner and a juster charge
To close the tale— that's sordid avarice.
I would not have you think I flatter now;
I would be just to all. I am no traitor.
Yet would my friends could know I die for York,
As I have lived. So Heaven receive my soul!
My enemies may judge me as they list.—

*(A dead march is heard at a distance.)*

It is my summons, and I go.... Just God,
I have a brother: let not fall on him
The weight of my deservings! Be my head

The last that drops in this unhappy cause!—
Succour great York, if that for England's good
Great York doth fight! But my first prayer is
England;
Her peace, her weal, her fortune; may she stand
The dread and envy of living foes—
A land-mark, in the ocean of huge time,
For worlds that would be great.—I now am
ready.——*(Is led away.)*

SCENE III.—*King* HENRY *discovered in his private Apartment, alone.*

HENRY.

Yet is there time, oh Heaven—yet is there
time!—
The murderous and bloody act doth not,
With such a winged execution, fly
Toward its effect, but I may give it pause
Ere the axe fall. This is a breathing time,
Which Heaven allows to strengthen my re-
morse;
And from the sweet and tearful eye of pity
Drop a huge sea to drown my great revenge.

Oh, then, relent, and the unstained sword
Of justice sheath; for such a stroke as this
Doth, from the face and body of our state,
Strike its best jewel; and my foes will say—
"Richmond to Stanley owes such kindly love
As roots to earth, wherein they grow and prosper,
As fruits unto the blessed golden sun."
Oh, this will give mine enemies a tongue
To hiss me from my throne, and put a sword
In every hand to ward the blow from them,
And push it on my head.—

*Enter* MORTON, *with papers.*

MORTON.

The inventory
Of William Stanley's fortunes, good my liege,
Doth much exceed the hasty computation
Of those who roughly valued his domains.
Here stands enrolled each separate article
That makes the sum of all his wealth.

HENRY.

That scroll
I must peruse. *(Reading.)*—Ha! how is this, indeed!

I' th' castle of Holt are forty thousand marks
In ready gold; with jewels, plate, and chattels,
To make them double: and moreover here,
Flocks and estates that fright us in a subject.
Oh, this is rank!

MORTON.

Besides, his followers,
Fed by his wealth, do make a mighty host.

HENRY.

All these I gave him. Not a tittle here
But was my royal gift. Ingratitude,
Making his treason blacker, arms anew
My vengeance.—Leave me.—See that execution
Be done on all his lands and properties.
Such wealth befits a monarch, not a subject.—
[*Exit* MORTON.
Why, what a sour and peevish thing is man,
When the sweet milk of nature curdles in him,
To poison kindness! Now, oh memory,
Be thou extinct, since all thy breeding here
Is irksome loathing; since thou canst not bear
The load that love lays on thee; since thou'rt sick
To hear of benefits! Stanley remembers,

But wants that sweet remembrance of the heart
To make all sweet. The word that pardons him
Would be the blast to rouse ingratitude
To stalk across the world. Infants would murder
The womb that bore them: babes would tear the breasts
Of tender-hearted mothers; and all good
Would strike at its Creator!—He must die.—

*Enter the Earl of* OXFORD.

EARL OF OXFORD.

My liege, th' impostor Warbeck shews his banners
Along the Kentish coast.

HENRY.

What doth he there?

OXFORD.

In purpose of a landing.

HENRY.

Let him land:
We'll meet him there.

*Enter the Earl of* SURREY.

SURREY.

News, valiant King, from Scotland.
The Tweed cannot keep back her hungry sons;
And plunder threats the north.

HENRY.

We 'll drive them back.—
Come, then, to battle. Where 's the Earl of Derby?
We 'll be his guest a while.—The wary Scot
Would tamper with our faith. If we must fight,
We 'll do it bravely too.—Ourselves will northward.

*Enter the Earl of* DERBY.

DERBY.

The men of Kent have bravely paid the foe.
All who have dared take footing on the land
Have left their bodies there.

HENRY.

Ay, but the north?

SURREY.

The north, my liege, is cold in thy behalf,
And we must warm it.

HENRY.

Good, my noble lord:
We can but die;—and yet we will not die.—
What dare you do?

SURREY.

All that your grace dares order.

HENRY.

Well, we must do as braggart gamesters use;
With swelling breath puff out our empty means,
That when we 're hollowest, men may fear us most.—
Call all our friends together: make good speed.
Ease may walk slow, but danger craveth haste.
My good Lord Derby, ever be our father.
'T is a rude task to punish.—Ah, those looks!—

Well, we may cheer them yet.——Come, now
away.
To Latham, to Earl Derby, to our father,
Whose guest we 'll be. And thence, my lord of
Oxford,
The like to you. Both valiant peers, and sure.

# ACT IV.

## SCENE I.—*On the borders of Northumberland.*

*Enter* WARBECK, *with his Partisans; and King* JAMES, *with his Partisans; Lady* CATHARINE GORDON; *Attendants, Soldiers, Guards, &c.*

WARBECK.

Thanks to the valiant majesty of Scotland,
Whose deeds and words are of one hue and fashion.

JAMES.

And therefore have we joined thee to our blood;
And the white rose of England, with a rose
As fair of Scottish growth. She is our cousin,
And pledge of our intents.

WARBECK.

Lady, I'll love thee,
Both as my queen and fate.

*Enter a Messenger.*

MESSENGER.

The foe advances.
Already can we count their foremost ranks.

JAMES.

Place her in safety.—We will to the right,
And rest on yonder hill.

[*Exit* JAMES, *with followers, &c.*

WARBECK.

And we will here,
To bide their coming.—Sweet, a while farewell.

[*Exit Lady* C. GORDON, *with attendants, &c.*

WARBECK.

Alas, poor bleeding country! Oh, my friends,
Will not the fat and fruitful earth, made rich
With its own gore, in lieu of provender
Bear poison to our house? And, as we tread,
Shall we not sink into its crimsoned ooze,
Heart deep in bitterness?

SIR G. NEVIL.

Banish such thoughts.
Better those pale shores redden with our blood,
Than, with their sick complexion, anger Heaven

By daily recollection of this Harry.—
Lo, where they come.

*Enter the Earl of* SURREY, *at the head of* HENRY'*s party.*

SURREY.

Turn, rebel, and obey.

WARBECK.

Turn thou, and yield before thy lawful king.

SURREY.

We have done so; and therefore are we Henry's.

WARBECK.

Henry of Richmond doth usurp my seat,
And we are come to pluck the tyrant down.

SURREY.

Warbeck, the wandering Jew, would fain usurp it.
But we will fight to keep the rebel down.

WARBECK.

This, then, to prove it.—Surrey, to thy guard.

*(The parties fight.* WARBECK'*s has the advantage. After which)*

SURREY (*meeting* WARBECK).

Ha! must I praise this valour in a traitor!

WARBECK.

Surrey, my deeds no rebel judge shall try:
Nor do they want the praise thou canst bestow.
The blood that Richmond shed—Lord William Stanley's,
With many nobles of the land, whose lives
He hath untimely cropt—lie heavy on thee,
And all abettors of his usurpation.

SURREY.

Nor less on thee and thine be Warbeck's guilt;
Who, with a rude and boisterous intent,
To pluck the crown and majesty of England
From Richmond's lawful brow, who rightly wears them,
Comes, with a foreign levy at his heels,
To wound the gentle lap of fenceless peace,
And drown the island in her native blood.

WARBECK.

Our hands shall shew 'twixt Richmond's guilt and mine,

Which is more deep; and Heaven be on his side
Who least has Heav'n offended. Now to proof.—

*(*SURREY *and* WARBECK *fight.* SURREY *retreats off the stage.)*

*Enter Lord* WILLOUGHBY, *meeting Sir* G. NEVIL.

LORD WILLOUGHBY.

Turn thee, and fight.

SIR G. NEVIL.

I will not fly before thee.

*(They fight. Sir* G. NEVIL *is wounded.)*

[*Exit Lord* WILLOUGHBY.

SIR G. NEVIL.

The die is thine. Give my sword again.—
Ay, but this arm is stiff, and cannot wield it.
That's nothing, yet. 'T is but a little blood,
Whose timely letting ministers to health.—

*(Various skirmishes, in which the King's party is routed, and retreats. Then)*

*Enter the Earl of* OXFORD *aad Sir* R. BRAY.

OXFORD.

So hot a day hath England never seen!

SIR R. BRAY.

A bloody day;—a day of shame and sorrow!

OXFORD.

Some demon, riding in the fretted air,
Points out to Warbeck's host the rule of battle,
And marshals their array.—What men are these?
*(Soldiers fly across the stage.)*
What new disgrace? Oh, day of shame, indeed!
Dastard, come not with those pale looks of thine,
To scare our legions from their wonted mind.

A SOLDIER.

The Scot is in arms, and burns all before him. Our houses are in flames; our fields are laid waste; and we fly all!

OXFORD.

And wherefore fly? What safety hope you thus?

Is there a privilege for cowards, none
For the brave man who fights? Your naked backs
Shall the sword spare, and not your steeled breasts?
Or feel you less the wounds you take in flight
Than those you give in battle? Can you live
To lick the proud dust from your conqueror's feet,
Whom you will not encounter with your swords?

SOLDIER.

Nay, we have fought while there was hope; now we have none left but in flight.

OXFORD.

There 's not a mailed miscreant in the field
That would not fight with hope upon his side.
Oh, mighty valiant when no danger 's nigh!
But if you have no virtues of the brave,
Seek safety in your terrors; let your fears
Do deeds which, in the bloody book of fame,
Shall give some colour to your palid flight,
And write you men again.

A SOLDIER.

Shew us any means to take the field again,
and we'll dispute it inch by inch.

OXFORD.

Ay, say you so? Nay, then I know you now—
You are King Henry's soldiers. I did think
You were hot-livered knaves, whom discontent,
O'er-cloyed ease, or wanton fury, armed,
Ye knew not why, in shallow Warbeck's cause.
I 'll lead you on where conquest waits to crown
you.
But be prepared to die. Who is not so,
Should never hope for victory.—Away!

[*Exeunt, shouting.*

SCENE II.—*Another Part of the Frontiers.—Various Parties skirmish, and retreat.—Then enter King* JAMES, *with his Army, Officers, &c.*

JAMES.

We cannot drive these English louts away,
Into their dens again. They still return.
Methinks that every one has lives as many
As we have fought them rounds today.—

*Enter an Officer.*

OFFICER.

My liege,
See where the English run.

JAMES.

Down after them.—
Soldiers, pursue these flying Englishmen;
Or, if they be so nimble, we have cannon
Shall send loud poursuivants to stop their speed.

OFFICER.

Great monarch, give the word, not one shall 'scape;
Or, as they fly, their burning cottages
Shall light their steps through blood and desolation.

JAMES.

Ravage the country round. Let wasting fire
Feed on the crops of this Northumberland.—
York claims the land; but, win it he who may,
It shall not be worth having: that I aim at.—

*Enter* WARBECK.

WARBECK.

Oh, noble King, lend me your ear a while,

That I may save your royal name from ill.—
Some spoilers grossly do misuse your power,
Making the grim and wrinkled face of war
More horrible than itself. The earth is guiltless;
The furrowy fields of unarmed industry
Have not rebelled. The yellow-gifted land
Denies no tribute to us.—Spare, oh spare it,
Lest justice turn to crime, and....

JAMES.

What is this?
My lord, you speak in such an altered mood,
I cannot guess at it.

WARBECK.

This is not war;
'T is desolation, ruin, and despair.
Mothers and infants bleed—oh, piteous sight!—
And undistinguished murder stains our swords.
Have you no pity on these English sufferers,
Yet pity your own glory?

JAMES.

You do well
To talk of mercy thus;—'t is majesty.
But it were better majesty to conquer,
And after to use mercy at your leisure.

Why, what you plead for, is not yours, my lord:
And you but cater for your enemies.

WARBECK.

When I came stranger to the Scottish throne,
Your highness bid me hope to win my crown;
But gave no lesson how to wade in blood.

JAMES.

And you, my lord, came stuffed and swoln with hope,
With promises, with vauntful expectation,—
If it be so that you indeed did hope,—
Not one of which but is a liar now,
Upon the proof of time.—Did you not say
That all Northumberland would join your cause;
That York would help, and all the north be yours?
Yet which of them hath stirred? Not one, by heaven!
And Scotland hath led forth her valiant sons,
But to a bootless enterprise and shame.
Yet this for you who talk of mercy now,
That Henry may feed fatter.—Were there hope

That you might reign, I could have held a while
My hungry troops from havock. But remember,
If Richmond be your foe, England is mine!

[*Exit, with his train.*

WARBECK.

A foe, indeed! ——Oh now, fair England, learn,
—Thou precious jewel in Europa's crown!
—Thou Neptune's great vicegerent, and his queen!
—Thou nurse of future empires; and thou citadel,
Framed to defend the worth of all mankind!
—Thou reason's temple, freedom's garden, learn!
Never let foreign fiends approach thy heart;
Or foreign syrens sing thee to repose;
Or foreign vampyres suck thy sleeping blood.
They are thy foes that smile, and hate, and envy,
And would bring harm to thee; while all thy good
Flows in thine own rich veins. Seek none but there;
For none will ever be so true to thee,

As thou may'st to thyself. Ill-omen'd kings,
Who fly to foes for help!—

*Enter Sir* G. NEVIL.

SIR G. NEVIL.

The English come.
Richmond, at York, leads on ten thousand troops,
And succours crowd to join him.

WARBECK.

And the Scot
Is come to conquer, not to help us, Nevil.

SIR G. NEVIL.

A messenger from Spain hath passed through York,
And comes to treat of peace.

WARBECK.

Then farewell, Scotland,
Where our hopes famish now. I feel how 'tis;
And James would hold us loosely. Come, away.

SIR G. NEVIL.

Whither, my lord?

WARBECK.

Nay, that I know not yet.

But we must fly from Scotland.—*(A trumpet.)*
'T is the King.—
By my last hope, I will not meet him now.
[*Exeunt* WARBECK *and* NEVIL.

*Enter* JAMES, *and his train.*

JAMES.

Where is the lord ambassador from Spain?
They speak him a right reverend honour'd man,
And we would shew him honourable welcome.

*Enter* DON PEDRO DE AYALA.

AYALA.

Health and long happiness, good will and peace!

JAMES.

A pious wish, well worth a peaceful errand.—
What would your excellence with me?

AYALA.

From Spain
I seek your majesty.

JAMES.

Indeed! from Spain?
Or, with more truth, from England?

AYALA.

Ferdinand
Hath ever wished the welfare of this isle,
Which cannot prosper by its own division;
And therefore come I with my master's hope,
That the two bleeding kingdoms may withhold
From further strife, and heal the recent gashes
Which their too towering quality of blood
Hath deeply struck, each on the other's breast.

JAMES.

Nor wish I less for the sweet hour of peace,
When Scot and Englishman may grow together.
But Henry doth me wrong. Hath he not blown
The hot coals of dissension through my land,
And paid the rebel spirits of my nobles
To riot 'gainst their monarch? Was this well,
Or like a royal king? Hence have our hills
Sent out their hardy sons upon the plain,
To punish all our southern borderers.
Had Henry shewn himself a king indeed,
We should have so esteemed him.

AYALA.

Please your highness,
We can explain these seeming outrages;

And give such satisfaction to your grace
As shall be fitting.

JAMES.

If we should consent
To hear of peace, we cannot stoop to it
But on the terms express and stipulate
Of Warbeck's safety. We have sworn to him
He never should repent him of his trust.
On a king's oath we swore it; and we know
The reverence due to that.

AYALA.

Let him have shipping
To take him where the winds may press his flight:
We will not ask for more.

JAMES.

On such conditions
We're bound to hear what you propose to us.
Come to my tent, and let us there agree
What further may befit the general cause.
Into your hands we do resign ourselves.

## SCENE III.—*The Earl of* OXFORD'*s Castle at Henningham.*

*Enter* HENRY, *meeting the Earls of* OXFORD *and* DERBY.

HENRY.

Well, our brave host, what tidings bring you now?

OXFORD.

Good news, my liege. The Jew grows sick in hope,
And Scotland will not heal him.

HENRY.

This is well.
Peace were as nought, without such sure foundation
As we can rest on. Then 't were peace, indeed.
But shall we hold the Jew? Think you, my lords,
Our brother will deny him at our asking?—
And what were peace without him?

*Enter Lord* WILLOUGHBY.

LORD WILLOUGHBY.

Now, rejoice;
Scotland accepts your bounty.

HENRY.

And the Jew?...

LORD WILLOUGHBY.

Is gone for Ireland.

HENRY.

Curst be the brigantine
On which he rides! tempests howl after it!
And the disordered bed of the wild sea
Be all its grave! no plank of it be blown
Upon a human shore!—Wherefore is this?

WILLOUGHBY.

The Scot did urge a promise to this purpose.

HENRY.

A promise, sayst thou, to a renegade!
What promise from a king to such a wretch
Is tenable in obligation, duty,
Or can be sound in policy? There's none;
And Scotland mocks us.—Call you this a peace?
Ay, such a peace as keeps alive our hate

Beyond the goading heat of war. This Scot
Knows well how he can shake us. Time may be
When we can shake him too: but now our need
Must bear his mouthing.... So, then, kings are crost
Like meaner creatures. But to cross a king
Is no mean argument. Yet, lo, a wretch
Makes pale my cheek with hungry watchfulness,
And robs me of my due of rueful harm
Which the Scot owes me, and should pay me else.
Well, let this be a while... But we shall see...
My good Lord Oxford, 't is a pleasant castle;
Safe, and... Your lordship hath much bound us to you,
And strained your means, I fear, to do us honour.

OXFORD.

What subjects owe in duty to their king,
Is paid most cheerily.

HENRY.

Your hospitality
Is great in every mouth; yet, on my life,

Report hath cut it short. Your splendour, too!—
Why gentlemen and yeomen of the shire
Do wear your livery, and are your servants.

OXFORD.

Your highness overrates my retinue.
These are no menial servants, but dependents,
Who do me service in an hour like this.

HENRY.

Ha! is it so? Have I no power in England?
Or are my laws but made in mock'ry,
To be laughed down by all the world's abuses?
Am I so weak a king, that my own subjects...
My lord, you're not the Scot.... Ha, know you not
That we expressly have forbidden this?
Before my face, you dare affront my law.
I thank you for your hospitable splendour;
But my solicitor must talk with you.—
These peers who do me service trespass on me,
And think they may climb Heaven.—My lord, farewell.

[*Exit with his followers.*

OXFORD.

I know what it will cost me. Fool was I,
To spread my treasure in the plunderer's eye.

SCENE IV.—*The Duchess of* BURGUNDY'*s Palace in the Netherlands.*

*Enter the Duchess of* BURGUNDY.

DUCHESS.

The faith of kings is but necessity!
Hath James not sworn, and sworn, and then forsworn?
The very oaths that made him false to Richmond,
Now make him false to us.—News from the coast.

*Enter an Attendant.*

ATTENDANT.

A ship hath newly watered in our harbour,
Freighted with news; and, on the southern sea,
Are seen more vessels making for our ports.

DUCHESS.

What doth it bear?

ATTENDANT.

The Duke of York, from Scotland,
Fled cross the seas to Ireland, where revolt
Reared its bold head against the blood of Lancaster:
There many, faithful to the cause of York,
Knowing the gracious person of their sovereign,
And holding true to their allegiance sworn,
Flocked to his standard, and a gallant band
Already grew around it; when from Cornwall...

DUCHESS.

Well, when from Cornwall...

ATTENDANT.

Messengers arrived,
Inviting him to head the insurrection
Which soon should place him on the English throne.

DUCHESS.

And did he so?

ATTENDANT.

With a few score of Irish,
Collected from the bravest, he set sail,
And is arrived in England. Adverse storms

Have long withheld these news upon the seas,
Which else had sooner met you.

DUCHESS.

Go, let some
Be held in waiting round about the coast.
But hark; a signal . . .

*Enter a second Attendant.*

SECOND ATTENDANT.

News are come on shore
From the once hope of Margaret.

DUCHESS.

Speak again.
What are thy news?

SECOND ATTENDANT.

I will not be the bearer,
Lest they should prove too heavy.

DUCHESS.

Slave, think'st thou
They will sink me, too?

SECOND ATTENDANT.

Here is one who better
May heave their weight aloft, to meet your

*Enter Lady* BRAMPTON.

DUCHESS.

Now tell me quickly, how much of our hope
Is cut off at one breath?—

LADY BRAMPTON.

All, lady, all.—

DUCHESS.

Is then all lost? (*Lady* BRAMPTON *makes a sign in the affirmative.*)— All lost. (*A pause.*)——Well, now say on;
For I can hear it. Who conceives great things
Must greatly hear their ruin.—Speak.

LADY BRAMPTON.

Warbeck
Is Richmond's now, and lost!

DUCHESS.

Alive, or dead?

LADY BRAMPTON.

His prisoner, and alive.

DUCHESS.

Ha! miscreant blood!
Could not the name I put on thee give courage
And composition to thy meaner parts?

But, how is't now with me? He should have gone
Where secrets can't be told..... Well then, alive?—

LADY BRAMPTON.

From Exeter, hearing that Richmond came
With some new thousands, Warbeck fled by night
To Bewley monast'ry; but pardon promised,
He yielded to the king: and, in the Tower,
He lies his prisoner, now.

DUCHESS.

Then all is lost:
And here's a double weight, each stout enough
To crack a noble heart. Now, Lancaster,
Revel in pomp, thy gayest purple on,
For York, poor York, can never harm thee more.
This was the last push of my policy,
And I the last who bore thee duly hatred.

LADY BRAMPTON.

Do not think thus; for many an English heart
Doth bear a hate as deadly.

DUCHESS.

'T is not so;—
I say 't is not.—Ha! who can hate like me?
Who dares to wear such passion in his breast?
Or where's his title to such rage as mine?
Let those, whose antique hatred chronicled,
Doth make the cold blood curdle in the heart,
Atrides' brethren, tell me they were foes;
That was a fable: but I'll shew them here
A living wrath more black, more dread, more bloody;
And tell the rage of York and Lancaster.

LADY BRAMPTON.

A noble fire struck from a cold chill tale.

DUCHESS.

The blood that is not York is cold—is tame,
And cannot feel the justice of my rage.
But be it so, for 't is my privilege;
And I am absolute in hate.

LADY BRAMPTON.

Most just
Is this most noble wrath. Yet be not moved
Beyond the wholesome measure of despair;

Nor give to fury all your nobler parts:
For yet revenge....

DUCHESS.

And wherefore should I not?
Why shall I not despair? Have you not known
To what great births Despair hath been the father?
No, here I take him to my bosom, never
To know divorce asunder. Though my thoughts
Be barren as the tided strand o' th' ocean,
Yet will I mischief breed. My heart shall be
Pale Hatred's empire, and his ministers
Revenge and Fury; none, his meanest subjects,
But such as can curse Lancaster. We'll war
Against his peace; 't were better never be
Than suffer what we'll do. Oh, blessed hate!
Hate that doth make me love myself to live!

LADY BRAMPTON.

Your highness is transported from yourself.
How will it be when I have told you?—

DUCHESS.

What?

LADY BRAMPTON.

Warbeck hath made confession....

DUCHESS.

That 't was I
Who set him on, who called him York, who plotted....
Why, then there's comfort. Lancaster hath known
To what excess I hate him!—Ha, alas,
What thought was that!

LADY BRAMPTON.

Nay, say it boldly to me:
For, by the speaking witness in your cheek,
'T was something dreadful.

DUCHESS.

It hath vanquish'd me,
And dashed my nobler spirits to the ground.
I am a woman now.... Oh, what a name
Doth this success bequeath me!—Lancaster
Shall tell my story now.... Nor is that all:
Oh, conscience, conscience!

LADY BRAMPTON.

What a pang was there!

DUCHESS.

I came a spotless virgin to this land.
Nine years I was a true and loyal wife.

Now, full sixteen I've bathed my widow's weeds
With tears of sad, yet holy resignation.
With pious offices I've filled my hours,
And given my mite of comfort to the poor.
My heart has not been step-dame in its care
To my dead husband's issue; and young Philip
I've loved, as had his mother been my child:
And they who hate me most must call me just.
Yet to this false adventurer I gave
All true men's love of me, all honour past,
All reverence of time....

LADY BRAMPTON.

No more of this.—
Who greatly dares does greatly.

DUCHESS.

Not as I
Have dared. Success to me was doubly due;
And fortune, taking that, hath taken all.
So now I quit all living hope, for hope
More bitter when I'm dead.... Lead me away.—
I'll shut myself in darkness; for the day
Glares with such hideous broad and fiery eye,
I cannot look at it.... Yet I'll not weep:
I must be great till death, or babes will laugh

When they are told I would dethrone a king.—
If you should see me lessen, whisper to me
That I am York; then leave the rest to me.

## SCENE V.—*The Palace in London.*

*Enter King* HENRY, *with* MORTON *and* FOX.

HENRY.

It is not blood we seek. The tyrant Gloster,
By too much using it, hath worn the edge
Of bloody chastisement. Let them all live!
Our subjects are our strength. Yet they 've a fulness
Which breeds distemper, weak'ning them and us;
And we must ease them. See the commissioners
We named in Exeter be prompt and firm.
In such diseased times, the boldest practice
Is ever surest! What rebellion drains,
That shall the rebels pay.—Attends the queen?

MORTON.

She doth, my liege.

HENRY.

Well, see to our commission.
Neglect not one just fine. Look to 't.—Away.
[*Exeunt* MORTON *and* FOX.

*Enter* QUEEN, *&c.*

HENRY.

You, madam, doubtless will rejoice with us
That we are whole again.—Was it not bold,
Our aunt would pull us down from royalty,
To place her phantom there?—your aunt I mean:
For I am somewhat stranger. She forgot
Her niece was on our throne.—For you, I quit you
Of her designs; for you had fall'n with us.
Howe'er you may be York, you are our queen,
That 's something toward fealty.

QUEEN.

I 'm your wife,
And that is more toward it. Your unkindness,
Stronger than steel, disease, or aconite,
May pillow my cold body with the dust,

And rob your highness of a loyal queen;
But shall not make me traitor to myself.

HENRY.

We'll shew our love and trust. Here is a prisoner
Of royal value, cousin to the Scot,
And the Jew's wedded wife. She has been York,
And would have been a queen; sat on your throne,
And pluck'd you down from it. Yet she is fair;
And, by my life, most gentle.....Lead her hither,
The Lady Catharine Gordon.....You shall find her
A fair white rose, and whiter than her husband.

(*Enter Lady* C. GORDON.)

Is she not so? Now, you shall be her keeper,
You'll love her for the name she bore—'t was York.
Yet there's no name that might not well become her.

We do commend her to your love. Ourself
Will look to it.—(*Aside*) Ay, and will watch her well;
Lest any of that damned Jewish blood
Spring in her womb, to breed us after-pangs,
From its most monstrous birth. [*Exit* HENRY.

QUEEN.

Let not your griefs
Weigh down your gentle spirits to the ground.
I, who have heavier woes, yet bid thee stand.

LADY C. GORDON.

Oh, I must grieve; whether for York or Richard,
Warbeck or England's king, my heart knows not.
His name I weep not, nor his blood lament.
Whate'er his name and blood, he is my husband;
A very gentle, true, and noble lord.

QUEEN.

Whate'er he be, you are our Scottish cousin;
And more than cousin to our love and pity.

Thy sorrows shall add strength to my disease,
Whose part I take against myself.—Come, then,
And with thy tale give lasting health to me,
Life's feverish fit once past. Sing me to death
As mothers hush their babes with lullabies;
And quickly too, for I am weary.

# ACT V.

## SCENE I.—*London. A Street.*

*Enter Sir* R. GUILFORD *and Sir* R. EDGECOMBE.

SIR R. GUILFORD.

How fares the Queen today?

SIR R. EDGECOMBE.

Each day worse than the former; and 't is feared the addition of this new grief, which has just fallen upon her, will add the weight of many days to her present illness.

SIR. R. GUILFORD.

What new grief is that?

SIR R. EDGECOMBE.

Know you not that her mother, whom Henry so long has held a prisoner at Bermondsey, even now expires?

SIR R. GUILFORD.

Alas, I knew not of it! The autumn of her life hath been more sad than the spring of it did ever promise.

SIR R. EDGECOMBE.

Her misfortunes were most pleasing to all such as lamented her elevation; and, to say the truth, she did not so bear it but that many great ones had just reason to quail at her good fortune. To witness the honours she engrafted upon her own stock, and the oppression of many noble families.

SIR. R. GUILFORD.

Strange, that the strength and virtues of the Queen could not, in aught, extenuate the rigour of Henry toward her mother.

SIR R. EDGECOMBE.

She has not the power to do the good she wills to any. She must deem herself happy in being, as she is, the partner of Henry's bed, however she be estranged from his affections.

SIR R. GUILFORD.

If aught can give her a nearer place in his

affections, 't is the birth of this infant; whose veins are rich with the best blood of York and Lancaster.

SIR R. EDGECOMBE.

Yet will not this avail her; for Henry will hate, in him, that part of his own issue which, by her, is York. There be more means than sword or poison, pestilence or famine, to destroy that delicate creature—woman.

SIR R. GUILFORD.

What happy days might not Henry have brought to England and himself, had he been contented with what fortune gave him! But, instead of using it wisely, his jealousy has kept open the breach which all men wished to see closed; and he has shewn himself the head of a faction, more than a just, great, and politic monarch.

SIR R. EDGECOMBE.

Shall we walk forth, and gather what the humour of the time may teach us? I 'll attend you, if so it please you.

## SCENE II.—*A Prison in the Tower of London.*

*Enter two Keepers.*

FIRST KEEPER.

Why to be sure, as thou say'st, it is but a dry piece of knavery. There's no blood in it, so I may bring my mind to listen to it.

SECOND KEEPER.

It is no more; for we are not bound to ask why your great ones do so and so. 'T is enough if we can answer for what we do ourselves.—So look you, you and I must talk to this Warbeck, as though we were his friends, and pitied him.

FIRST KEEPER.

And that's the hardest on't. Why, how canst thou ever look as if thou pitiedst any man? What can soften those hard features of thine into a smile? Thou art like a winter in Lapland; and the old frost of thy face is so furrowed and seamed, that 't will crack ere thou

canst melt it to any human form.—But what is to be our share in the business?

SECOND KEEPER.

Our best share on 't is good fees, good rewards, and live at ease ever after.

FIRST KEEPER.

Ay, but how are we to compass it?

SECOND KEEPER.

As thus.—One of us must encounter Warbeck with a sigh, or a look—so; and speak to him.

FIRST KEEPER.

And what will he do then?

SECOND KEEPER.

He 'll feel inclined towards us, and bear us his good-will and trust.

FIRST KEEPER.

By 'r mass I 'd not have thought it. Well, and what next?

SECOND KEEPER.

Next we 'll seem to be moved by his "sufferings," I think he calls them, and offer to let him go.

FIRST KEEPER.

And thou think'st he 'll be fool enough to be-

lieve we are honest in this, and that we do it out of pure love. No, no; if we would have him trust us, we must drive a hard bargain with him.

SECOND KEEPER.

True, as thou sayst; and, as his running away might give him a kingdom, I'll e'en make him promise me as much as he wins.

FIRST KEEPER.

And, as I have always had to do with the law, I'll make him swear I shall be his chancellor. But how shall we get him out, when all's done?

SECOND KEEPER.

Tush, man; we must not get him out. 'T is all but seeming to do so.

FIRST KEEPER.

I'm sorry for't. 'T is better to be chancellor for a good deed, than get a poor purse for a bad one.

SECOND KEEPER.

We'll tell him that we can kill the other keepers, and the lieutenant of the Tower; seize the keys, knock down the guards, murder all

that we meet, and escape with him wherever he will.

FIRST KEEPER.

But, partner, if, after all now, this should be the true king! For, look you, though he hath confessed himself a knave, and told all his rogueries, yet I can't mind what a man says with a halter round his throat, and the two ends of it in the hands of him who would make him speak. If there should be nothing false about him but his falseness, and if we should help to hang the true king!—

SECOND KEEPER.

'T is no part of our business to enquire about that. All we know is, that here is a man who would be king, but could not; therefore, he that is king would be rid of him. Now, if we can do him that is king a service, good; and, as to our conscience, look you, all we can say is, that if Richmond were our prisoner, and Warbeck our king, we would do as much for each in his several capacity. All we do is for the true king; but we don't ask who the true king is.

FIRST KEEPER.

Ay; and moreover, there's no true king but he that's crowned; for King Henry's law says that no man shall be called a rebel who submits to him that is crowned. Now, in doing this, we obey Henry; and Henry is crowned; therefore there is no true king but Henry.

SECOND KEEPER.

Come, then, let's about it. Here is Warbeck's cell.

FIRST KEEPER.

And this other is the Earl of Warwick's.

SECOND KEEPER.

True; we must have both, or our affair is but half done.

FIRST KEEPER.

Heaven help thee, man, this Warbeck is so simple he knows not his right hand from his left. We shall never get him to any plotting. 'T was but t' other day he took a hen for a duck, and an ass for a horse.—But now to it.

SECOND KEEPER.

I'll go in to Warbeck. Stay thou here, and

so dispose our comrades as may be fittest for our purpose.

FIRST KEEPER.

Hark you, that will never do. If thou hast no looks but those, he 'll never trust thee.

SECOND KEEPER.

I 'll think upon my wife and children: that will soften them.

FIRST KEEPER.

Nor that neither. Thou hadst better do it as 't were out of revenge and hatred to our master Digby, or malice toward the king: thou 'lt look it better than pity toward Warbeck.

SECOND KEEPER.

Nay, I care not. I 'll see how the coast lies, and after do as I may.

*(Goes into* WARBECK'*s cell.)*

FIRST KEEPER *(alone).*

What a hard knave it is grown. I've known him softer once. But he is a quick spirit, and soon learned the trick of his business. I've been at it now these forty years, and be n't as

perfect yet at it as he is.—Now, comrades, know you what you have to do?

*Enter two more Keepers.*

THIRD KEEPER.

We only know we have to do as you bid us, under favour of master Digby, who commands both you and us; and the king, who is above all.

FIRST KEEPER.

Keep you without upon your post, as I stationed you; and when you hear us make a signal thus, with our hands, call in the guard that stands in readiness, rush in upon us, knock us all down. But, do you hear, go gently about it; for 't is no part of my office to lend my pate to thy knocks. Bind Warbeck hand and foot, and bring him hither.—Now to your posts. Cheerly, cheerly.

[*Exeunt the two keepers.*

*Enter* WARBECK *and second Keeper.*

WARBECK.

Indeed! Can this be done? Hast thou the power, as thou say'st, to accomplish it?

SECOND KEEPER.

Look you, master, or your grace, or majesty, or whatever you may be, I can make no fair faces upon the matter; but you look so kind, and so like what a man should look who would be a king, that I don't find in my heart the thing that should be there, to wrong you.

WARBECK.

But how is this? Speak; and if thou canst be as honest and kind as thy words, I'll never trust to looks again.

FIRST KEEPER.

Why, our neighbour doth it not so much out of kindness to your worship—though he may have a sort of nature in him too—as to spite our master Digby, whom we all hate; for, if your grace 'scapes, there is some chance he'll be hanged.

WARBECK.

Well, that matters not. And now, good fellows, your means.

FIRST KEEPER.

Here be some of the keys; the rest are in the warden's keep, without. First, we must pass

these doors. Our comrades watch on the other side: two of them we can be sure of.

SECOND KEEPER.

And the others we'll make still surer of, for we'll knock them on the head.

WARBECK.

Well, and then?

FIRST KEEPER.

Why then we'll take the keys which will open the way into the outer passage: there we shall meet with the guard...

SECOND KEEPER.

Which we must do for.

FIRST KEEPER.

And, having set them aside, the rest is easy; for the others, who know me, will let me pass: and, with this cloak about thy shoulders, we shall soon set thee out of reach, and then away. But, master, this is a perilous deed we go upon; and your greatness can't but think that we poor fellows run much hazard in it.

WARBECK.

But shall I not be with you to reward you?

SECOND KEEPER.

True, your highness; and if ever your majesty should have a kingdom to dispose of...

FIRST KEEPER.

Or should want...

WARBECK.

I have you by my side. So now come on.

FIRST KEEPER.

And here's the Earl of Warwick, whom we'll release too.

WARBECK.

You think not of it? 'T is a fool, a thing...

SECOND KEEPER.

Nay, it must be thus. All York shall be free, or 't is no plot of my hatching.

*(Goes to* WARWICK'*s cell, and leads him out.)*

FIRST KEEPER.

Come, follow us. But softly, softly.

WARBECK.

I'll follow you:—*(aside)*—but I'll have an eye upon you.

*[Exeunt.—After a short pause, the signal is heard; then a cry of "Down with the assassins! down with the traitors! to arms, to arms!"*

*Enter Sir* J. DIGBY.

SIR J. DIGBY.

Bring in the traitors; load them with chains. Put weights upon them tenfold. Where are they?

(WARBECK *and* WARWICK *brought in guarded, in chains.)*

SIR J. DIGBY.

Ha! the mortal foes of our most gracious sovereign! Nay, then, there 's more in this, and I must find it.

WARBECK.

I am your dupe; betrayed, lost. I feared as much. But 't is as well thus, as aught I should have hoped. I know what fate attends me, and I 'm ready.... The sooner, now, the better.

SIR J. DIGBY.

This is no common occurrence. — Guards, doubly guard them. I must to the king. On your peril, quit them not one moment. Bind those who would have helped them.

FIRST KEEPER.

I hope it is not real, for we did but jest.

WARBECK.

Wretches! villains!—Oh for my death, to rid me of such monsters!... But it will be soon; and then, farewell my dreams and life together.

SCENE III.—*The Queen's Apartments. The Queen is discovered on a Couch. Some Female Attendants near her; and Sir* T. BROUGHTON.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Sleep rock thee still in peace! A stormy waking
Waits thy short rest of life.

AN ATTENDANT.

Oh, who shall dare
To say her mother's dead!

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Dare!—Sweet gentleness,
Was that a word for thee! Whom hast thou scared
With thy blue eye, now faded? Oh, what wolf
Has this poor lamb devoured, that you say dare?

She hath scared none; but those who dare with her,
Have dared her to her death!

ATTENDANT.

You strain my meaning:—
Who shall have heart to speak?

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

We shall not need.
Fear quickens apprehension. Oh, thick Sleep,
That lend'st thy heavy mantle to her senses,
Be not a niggard now; withdraw it not,
Till thy great balm beneficent restore
The thefts of Sickness. Or, if leagued with Death,
Thou runn'st before thy churlish brother thus
To make his coming light, sweet is thy office,
To bear that spirit from its earthly spoil,
A blessed angel to the throne of grace!

ATTENDANT.

Behold, she moves.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Hush; for the sense wakes not,
Consenteth to these motions. They are life;
Else could I think she smiled in death.—Again

She moves!—I will not greet her waking
With such a sorry visage. I 'll withdraw.

QUEEN *(awakening).*

What are those voices?—whither are they fled?
For I heard many voices round my couch,
Strangely confused—the sounds of many murmurs.

ATTENDANT.

No voices, gracious Queen, that should be strange.

QUEEN.

Yet so they seemed to me.—Who has been here?

ATTENDANT.

Sir Thomas Broughton, with his humble prayers,
For your sweet health and comfort.

QUEEN.

Good Sir Thomas!
How fares our royal mother?—Is he gone?
Why staid he not?—She hath not this day sent
Her daily messenger.

SIR T. BROUGHTON *(advancing).*

Health and good comfort
Support your highness many days to come.

QUEEN.

Thanks, worthy friend. Could good men's
prayers assist me,
I trust I should be better.—And our mother,
How hath she fared today?

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Somewhat more happy
Than I have known of late.

QUEEN.

Take thou good heed.
Nor she nor I can comfort know on earth.
Our bliss must be from Heaven.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Madam, she 's happy.

QUEEN.

I saw it in your looks. She is in Heaven,
Where I will quickly find her.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

She is happy:
Yet I 've a touch of weakness so subdues me,
I cannot choose but weep it. Oh, our nature
Is ever stronger than philosophy;
Whose art and resolution cannot so
Sweeten prepared sorrow to our relish,

But it will taste most bitter; and the axe,
Whose daily use doth cut compunction short,
Acquaintance cannot soften.

QUEEN.

Did she die
As one in peace with man, herself, and God?

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Her death became her living; both were
righteous.

QUEEN.

She is in peace, and therein happier
Than they who made her wretchedness on earth.
Oh, Henry, Henry!...

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Heavy on his soul
Lie all the woes of York!

QUEEN.

In charity
We 're bound to all men; you and I, in duty,
Unto our king and lord.... Yet I cannot.....
There is a flood of grief here at my heart
That must o'erflow, do reason what it may!...
Oh, my poor mother!

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

'T is a blessed pang.

QUEEN.

My knee, that never should have bent to man,
I 've bent to Heaven and Henry for my mother.
—Heaven's will be done!... But 't is unnatural
To say we love the child, yet kill the parent;
To clothe the daughter in a suit of purple,
And strip the mother naked!... Oh, a crumb
From my rich board had been her luxury;
And that I dared not give.... I must not think
on 't;
For the long train of ills comes rushing on me
In terrible array, to fright my reason.—

*A Servant enters, and speaks to the Attendant.*

ATTENDANT (*to the* QUEEN).

A message from the king; the Lady Gordon.

QUEEN.

What would he more? I have no mother now;
No brother—none! I am alone, and friendless.
I have a child: if he would kill all York,
He must destroy that too!

ATTENDANT.

Shall she come in?

QUEEN.

She shall indeed, if the king sent her hither.—
[*Exit Attendant.*
I do mistrust her; for she hath betrayed me,
As I do think, to Richmond. But, alas!
Whom dare I trust? Who would be suffered near me,
That is not bought and sold? I wonder oft
Thou art allowed to stay; for thou art honest.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

My half hour's snuff of life is not worth purchase.
Since I have seen my mistress to the grave,
I have no more to stay me in this world.

*Enter Lady* C. GORDON.

LADY C. GORDON.

Madam, his highness sent me to condole
Your royal mother lost.

QUEEN.

Oh, had he sent you
To bear that royal mother even thus much

Of consolation, comfort, or support;
A smile of good-will, charity, or hope;
A medicinal word, a look of peace;
He need not now have sent you to condole her.
But you are cruel Richmond's gift to me;
And now the boldness of my grief doth tell you,
I 've found but ill in them.

LADY C. GORDON.

Oh, gentle Queen,
Judge me not harshly thus. Upon my knees
I swear I have not wronged you.

QUEEN.

It may be.
Yet I do think .... But I have fed on sorrow
Till all my taste is bitterness.

LADY C. GORDON.

I 'm true
As ever subject was.

QUEEN.

My mother died
In peace at least, with one true friend beside her;
While I ....

LADY C. GORDON.

Have many near your couch. The king
Commanded me to bear him presently
Report of your good health.

QUEEN.

He grows impatient.
I live too long.—Go you and tell him now,
That this last grief hath done him subtle service,
And tithed my very soul, which is bound in
By cords so weak, it soon will burst asunder.
Go, tell him that; and, when you laugh together,
When riotous convulsive merriment
Roars in your throats, and shakes your heaving sides,
A tear from this good man shall bid your mirth
Ring louder clamours. Or, if you but tarry
A little longer, you may bear yourself
The anxious tale, and say you saw me die.

LADY C. GORDON.

Oh, thy suspicions stab me. I can bear
The king no evil wishes; but for thee

I would my life's blood pour! Say that misfortune,
Not my deserts, corrupt me in your thoughts.

QUEEN.

It may be so. I was not ever thus.
'T is no ill-will I bear thee; so forgive me.
This sickness is unkind to me and thee,
If it doth break the fellowship we owe.
Love me when I am dead; and love my child,
Whose cherub voice hath toll'd my knell!...

LADY C. GORDON.

Weep, eyes,
And never look but through your tears!

QUEEN.

His life
Hath been my death. Since he came weeping hither,
I felt my going hence. My funeral peal
Was his first cry;—my darkness is his light!
And, in his small and blessed mould of man,
He hath, to dear exhaustion, sucked from me
My blood, my spirit, and my quintessence,
Leaving a joyful ruin.—Where is he?

He hath not lain upon my heart today.
I have not said a prayer o'er him since morning.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

My noble mistress, stir not thus your blood.
Rather invite yourself to rest again.

QUEEN.

I'll shortly rest. What can I do so sweet
As die for him I love? It is not death,
'T is life transfused; and I but breathe my soul,
Now rambling through this wide and shattered temple,
Into its dearest shrine.... Death, drop thy sting,
Nor lift thy grisly scythe against my head!
I am a mother. Go, and shake the bones
Of those who infinitely die for ever.
Maternity can triumph o'er thy dart!—
Help me a little; raise me.

LADY C. GORDON.

Mark, her cheek
Glows with unwonted blood. I never saw
Such life within her eye.

QUEEN.

And lo, in this
Might Richmond envy me; for he but lives,
While I die for my child!—Think you, my friends,
We shall have sense, and feeling, and disposal,
After our death, to love what we have loved?
Or, that the finer essence we shall wear
Shall lose our grosser memory? Trust me,
Although my hopes of bliss are infinite,
I would remember still I am a mother.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

The blood deserts her cheek. Soft lay her down.
Rest, rest a while.

QUEEN.

I'm, on the sudden, weak.
I feel sweet sleep again, and heavenly dreams
Come to invite me.... Lo, I see a cherub
Stretching his little arms ... I come, I come...
Stay by my side, and talk as I were with you;
'T will banish idle spirits from my couch.—
If sometimes I were hasty, harsh, unjust,
Pray you forgive me! Heaven forgive me too!

And God bless those who wrong me!—I would see
My child when I am warmer: these cold lips
Would fright him from me..... I shall live to kiss him!....

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Her grasp is chilliness. Ye hosts of saints,
Whether as ministers of sleep or death
Ye watch beside her couch, bring peace to her!

LADY C. GORDON.

Blest angels, strengthen her! Once more I'd hear,
From her own lips, she not mistrusts me.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Lo!
She makes as she would speak. Peace; we disturb her.——*(A pause.)*

QUEEN.

Why are you silent; for I love to hear
Your human voices near me.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

We did pray
For blessings on your couch. We thought you slept.

LADY C. GORDON.

Her head is sunken; and her hollow cheek
Gives sign of dissolution.

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Woe the hour!

QUEEN.

Heaven bless my child, forgive the king, and me!....

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Amen to all but one!.... *(Pause.)*—'T is quiet, all.

LADY C. GORDON.

I fear it is death's quiet!

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Can it be
The soul can part thus lightly from the body
Without a greater pang! In righteous men
It may be so. But I have seen the brows
Of sinful wretches, haunted at their deaths
By what their lives did evil, knit in tortures
And dreadful agonies; while virtue, sweeter
Than all the spicy conserves of the Nile,
Embalmeth beauty 'gainst the rotten breath

Of the corrupted grave. Heaven sets his mark
Upon the brow and forehead of our deeds,
That our last rising may proclaim our worth.

LADY C. GORDON.

I feel her heart no more!

SIR T. BROUGHTON.

Her touch is death,
And she hath breathed her last.... Oh, blessed spirit,
Sweet was thy passage from mortality!
How well in thee appears what I did say;
For thou art lovely, calm, and beauteous still!
A holy temple, where, but yesterday,
Thy Maker sat in glory! I will weep,
And then I'll follow thee. *(To Lady* C. GORDON.)——Now to the king,
And tell him how it stands.—Weep'st thou, good soul?
Nay, stay thy tears; for they may do thee harm.
Go, go, and speak to him; for I cannot.
I will not quit this corpse till cold earth part us.....

Though I am old, my grief shall stay for thee
(*to Lady* C. GORDON):
And we will weep together.——[*Kneels by the couch; and exit Lady* C. GORDON.

SCENE IV.—*King* HENRY's *Apartments in the Tower.*

*Enter King* HENRY *(alone).*

HENRY.

I am discomfited, as one whose limbs
Are cramm'd into a narrow continent,
Which they would burst. I 'm bound by oaths and words;
By treaties, promises; by sounds and breath;
By that which undo'th girls, robs silly creditors
Of means and interest, splits our proud species
In two base halves—the cheater and the dupe.
While all mankind plays with the counterfeit,
And cracks the brittle coinage at his will,
I dare not blow my breath upon its face!
In this are kings most weak; faith, binding them,

Is but the world's commodity.—A king!
I am no king, but apprehension's slave.
Gloster did stab two princes in the Tower;
And, by their death, I 'm crowned.... But this was bloody:
Teaching that fortune urged, not woo'd, o'erflies
The point we aim at, and alights beyond us.
Conquer my fears! there is one only way.
My fears and he are brothers twinned together,
Both at a birth, and so must die together.
They have one throat, and he who cuts that for me,
Rids me of both at once. What is 't to conquer,
If still we are as mortal to our terrors,
As to the roar of ordnance!—What is this?

*Enter Sir* J. DIGBY.

SIR J. DIGBY.

'T is I, my liege.

HENRY.

Is thy news good or bad?
One word.

SIR J. DIGBY.

The best.

HENRY.

Why, then I smile again.
The best is very well.

SIR J. DIGBY.

Warbeck hath made
A ruin of his faith, and treaty sworn;
And sought to fly.

HENRY.

Why then, he dies tomorrow,
And with him our last fears. Art sure of this?

SIR J. DIGBY.

My liege, he is fast bound; and we have proof
More than enough....

HENRY.

Is the plot murderous, bloody?
For by that blood I'll colour my proceedings
To the enquiring mob.

SIR J. DIGBY.

As you could wish.

HENRY.

And Warwick too?

SIR J. DIGBY.

Is with him.

HENRY.

This requires
Somewhat more thought.... Yet they shall die
tomorrow!...
You've made us stout and whole. We'll hear't
anon.—
Now, on my soul, how happy is the king
Who hath such officers.—They die tomorrow!...
We'll speak with you again. Mean while rejoice,
And be as blest as I am.—Here comes one
To tell another tale.— [*Exit Sir* J. DIGBY.

*Enter Lady* C. GORDON.

HENRY.

How fares the Queen?

LADY C. GORDON.

Dead, my lord, dead!

HENRY.

Indeed!—And can I hear this told
Without a greater shock?—Dead! is she dead?

LADY C. GORDON.

She died within these arms....

HENRY.

I found her true,
Gentle,—but she was .... York.—Well, apprehension
Lies buried in her grave.... Farewell, poor queen!
Thou 'rt better now thou 'rt lost. — Now, God forgive me,
I wished it thus.... Tush, fool, can wishes kill?
Well, from my soul, I do unwish it now!—
Fie, 't is a mutable and slanderous will
That blackens all its yesterdays!... But, oh,
A worse thought of the morrow!—— Noble father—

*Enter the Earl of* DERBY.

HENRY.

The Queen is dead!—What doth the rabble say
Of Lancaster and York?

DERBY.

That Lancaster

Should yield the crown to York's true lawful
heir,
Since York hath breathed her last.

HENRY.

And who is York?—
Who is the heir?—

DERBY.

Your royal son, my liege.

HENRY.

Bethink thee well! Thou mak'st unnatural war
Betwixt my flesh and me.

DERBY.

'Tis even thus
The people cry.

HENRY.

Oh, this will make me hate
The drop of blood that's York in his young
veins.—
Can we not use some fine anatomy
To trace it to his heart, and suck it out?—
My war within must be eternal. Peace
I cannot win. Ay, now indeed we'll mourn

The poor contents of that untimely urn
Which holds his mother's ashes!... Loss most
dear!
And worth not known, till past all hope and
fear!

FINIS.

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